

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER 1906

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER, 1906.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley, *Herbert*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS
RE PRIVATE BILLS.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY (Hon. P. Airey, *Flinders*), it was formally resolved—

That the Standing Orders relating to private Bills be so far suspended as to admit of the undermentioned Bill being introduced and dealt with in all its stages as a public Bill, viz. :—

A Bill to enable the trustees of the Gatton School of Arts to mortgage the land comprised in Deed of Grant No. 93204, being allotment 16 of section 17, county of Churchill, parish and town of Gatton, and to apply the moneys so raised towards the improvement of the said land and for other incidental purposes.

DALBY TO CATTLE CREEK RAILWAY
DISTRICT BILL.

POSTPONEMENT.

Upon the Order of the Day,

Consideration in Committee of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to apply the principles of betterment to the railway from Dalby to the township of Bell, a distance of 23 miles 70 chains, and known as the Dalby to Cattle Creek Railway, being called—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) said: I move that this Order be postponed until Thursday next, the reason being that it has been thought that it would be a convenience to hon. members to have a lithograph attached as well as a description in letter-press indicating the boundaries.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION—CHIEF OFFICE.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £8,305 be voted for the "Chief Office." There was an increase of £225 in salaries, and of £250 in contingencies—railway fares and freights, etc. The first increase was £50 to Mr. Ewart; then £100 to Mr. Story; £20 to Mr. Telford; and several small increases. As hon. members were aware, Mr. Ewart was promoted to the position of Director of Education as from the 1st January, 1905, but he did not receive any increase of salary. He had not had an increase since 1882. If hon. members desired he would give them the salaries that were paid to the directors of education in the other States. Mr. Story had been acting as Under Secretary since July, 1904, and had now been appointed permanently to that position. He also filled the position of chief clerk. Mr. Telford, who had been acting as registrar since the 19th May, 1902, had now been permanently appointed to that position. There had been one or two changes among the clerks. Mr. Costin had been transferred to the office of the Chief Protector of Aborigines; and another junior clerk had resigned in order to go into business on his own account. Two junior clerks had been promoted and two probationers had been promoted to fill the vacancies of these two juniors. Every officer had received an increase on his salary except the accountant and the senior messenger.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): He was sure everybody in the House who knew Mr. Ewart would not think that he was overpaid at £600 a year. That Public Service Inquiry Board recommended that his salary be increased to £700 a year. He had the document in his hand which said that Mr. Ewart's salary should be increased from £600 to £700. In this case the recommendation to give Mr. Ewart an increase was not taken into consideration. Mr. Story, the Under Secretary, was not overpaid either; he well earned the salary he was getting. There was nothing else in the first vote that deserved comment as far as he could see. He would like to know if they were going to discuss the whole of the education question in this vote, or whether they would take each vote step by step. There was one matter he would like to bring up. This Government proposed an age limit; it was applied to Mr. Kerr, the head master of the Normal State School. He thought that most people who knew Mr. Kerr would say that he was quite fit to remain in charge of that school. He understood that Mr. Kerr would have to take a small private school to maintain himself and his

family as soon as he left the Government service. The service was losing one of the best men it had in its employ when Mr. Kerr went. There were also other officers to whom the age limit applied. For instance, Mr. MacDonald the police magistrate, who was, of course, not in the Education Department.

Mr. KERR: You drew attention to his age yourself; it appears in *Hansard*.

HON. R. PHILP: He did not wish the Government to dispense with his services. If Mr. Kerr was not fit to remain in charge of the Normal State School—he did not think there was a member of the Committee who would say that Mr. Kerr was not fit to do so—then why not give him a smaller school? He thought it was a mistake to have a hard-and-fast rule in connection with public servants who reached the age limit.

Mr. BURROWS: Who originated that system?

HON. R. PHILP: The present Government did. It was the present Government that made it a hard-and-fast rule.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The present Government is carrying it out.

HON. R. PHILP: The present Government decided that nobody over a certain age should remain in the public service. That was a mistake, and it was a loss to the country when they lost the service of these men. It was not too late for the Government to reconsider their decision. When they had men of undoubted ability whose physique was equal to that of much younger men, these men ought to be retained in the service. It was a distinct loss to the country to let them go.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): He quite agreed with the leader of the Opposition that the matter of public servants reaching an age limit was one that was deserving of the consideration of the House. Whether they discussed the broad principle of whether men should be retained in the service when they had reached the age of sixty-five years or not, at any rate, the question was one that deserved consideration. He knew that the law was that when a man reached the age of sixty-five his services might be retained at the pleasure of the Public Service Board and the Minister until he reached the age of seventy. Then his services were dispensed with altogether. In some cases there was a wise exercise of that power on the part of the Public Service Board, and in every case a man should be treated on his merits. There were men seventy years of age whose services had been dispensed with, and it was a loss to the State. This applied not only to men in the Education Department, but in other departments also. If a man was able to render efficient service to the State it was desirable that his services should be retained. Probably that would mean an alteration of the Public Service Act, still some consideration ought to be given to the matter, and they ought not to be too anxious to dispense with the services of a man because he was old. So long as a man had energy and retained his full vital force, then the long experience he had had in the public service would render him more valuable than a new man. In the State they wanted men of experience and knowledge, who knew the routine work and were able to carry it out efficiently. They should not allow themselves to lose the services of men whose assistance they could not very well do without. There was another aspect of the question, and that was that the young men coming on were desirous of acquiring higher positions in the service. They would think they had a right to gain these higher positions until they reached the head, and when they saw they

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had only a few years ahead of them they would look on the matter from another aspect. However, members of the Committee did not want to look on that aspect of the matter at all.

The HOME SECRETARY: I don't see why you should not do so.

Mr. TOLMIE: They should look on it as the value of a man's services to the State. There were a number of matters in connection with the report to which he would like to refer. At the outset he would say that it was a very interesting report they had received from the Minister for Public Instruction, who gave his opinion of the work done under the new schedule after twelve months in operation. It was too early to say after twelve months whether the new schedule was going to be of the service it was thought it would be when it was framed, but evidently it must have met with the approval not only of a great number of the teachers, but inspectors too; and the Minister in his report spoke of the schedule as giving great satisfaction and likely to improve the quality of education being given in the State. That was a matter for congratulation. Before dealing with the details of the report, he would ask the Home Secretary, who was in charge of the vote, if there was any foundation for the statement they had seen in the public Press—he believed it came from an official or semi-official source—that it was the intention of the Government to amend the Education Act next year with a view to consolidating the existing legislation. He thought the time had arrived when this work ought to be tackled. At present they had no control over the secondary education, and the Minister was endeavouring to secure that control, and also to control the technical education. Still, he (Mr. Tolmie) thought it desirable that this subject ought to be approached in a more comprehensive way than had been done up to the present time, and they should endeavour as much as possible to bring the whole of their education work under one control. If it were the intention of the Government to take action in the matter, he should like to know if the Government were going to extend the scope of the work that had been done with the object of providing or University education in Queensland. It was the desire of this House that that should be done. That had been emphasised in this Chamber, and he believed it was the desire of the people outside that it should be done. Public opinion in Queensland was running strongly in the direction of endeavouring to bring Queensland into the same position as the other States with regard to higher education. It would be a matter of interest to members, he was sure, and to the country, to know what was the intention of the Government next session with regard to that matter. They could hardly expect a measure of this kind to be introduced this session. He was glad to know that the Government had returned to the system of appointing itinerant teachers, and he believed that two extra ones had been appointed. On looking over the report he found that the itinerant teacher in the Southern district had travelled over something like 3,274 miles of country, that he had visited 108 families having 304 children, and that this had been done at an expense to the department of £332 10s. 6d. That was a shade over £1 per head. The visits of this teacher was giving an opportunity to the children living in the isolated parts of the State to learn to read and write. If they knew how to read and write, opportunities might come afterwards to avail themselves to a greater extent than they could without the chances they received now. The Government ought to be commended for reverting to this practice. It was a great pity there had been a stoppage in

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that work, even if it was only for a short time. He saw a clause in the report dealing with the work in which they were endeavouring to compel the attendance of children at schools. When the State provided opportunities for children to be educated, it was only right that parents should be compelled to take advantage of those opportunities to the fullest extent. If a parent had a chance of sending his child to school and neglected to do so, it was only right for the State to intervene and compel the parent to do his or her duty.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: He might be receiving private instruction.

Mr. TOLMIE: If the hon. gentleman paid much attention to the Education Act or the regulations, he would not make that interjection, because the State would not intervene in such cases. The State wished to give children every opportunity of acquiring education. There was another matter to be considered in connection with the compulsory clauses of the Act—whether they should be applied only to a child under twelve years of age. While that was a lower limit than any of the other States fixed, under the Factories and Shops Act it was provided that a child must be fourteen years of age before he could be sent to work in a factory unless permission were granted by the Minister for Works to allow a child of thirteen years of age to go to work. Those who had had any experience of the working of the Education Act would know that when a child had been educated up to the age of twelve years there was generally a desire on the part of the parents to keep the child home from school. At that age the child was not allowed by law to go to work, except under certain conditions where the factory laws did not apply, or where the Minister gave special permission, and the result was that a great many children between the ages of twelve and fourteen had their education neglected. They were not working and they were not going to school. He knew that it was the desire of the teachers throughout Queensland that the age limit should be raised.

The PREMIER: That is particularly in the dairying districts.

Mr. TOLMIE: He was going to make some reference to the dairying districts, probably for the special benefit of the Premier. The report said—

The rapid growth and expansion of dairying in Queensland is very gratifying; but there are indications that the industry is having a bad effect upon the school attendance.

He did not think the attendance declined because the parents were engaged in the dairying, but because they believed that, when

[4 p.m.] their children reached the age of twelve years, they were educated up to the standard and might leave school. The tendency was not confined to the dairying districts at all. He knew something about the dairying districts, and he knew that the people in those districts had as keen a desire that their children should receive a good education as any other class of people. The period between the age of twelve and fourteen years was a most critical one in the life of a child, and the State should raise the standard from twelve to fourteen years.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about raising the compulsory minimum age from six to seven?

Mr. TOLMIE failed to see that that would be as effective as increasing the standard from twelve to fourteen years. It was all right in towns, where children had seldom to walk more than half a mile, to fix the minimum age at six, but in country districts it was rather hard to

make it compulsory for children of six years to attend school, as they often had to walk 2 miles.

Mr. PAGET: 4 and 5 miles in many cases.

Mr. TOLMIE: It was not compulsory then. It would be rather unwise to lower the compulsory age. He would make it higher instead of lower. He was very glad to notice that the department was working so much in sympathy with the Agricultural Department, more particularly in the opportunities the latter department was affording teachers to acquire some knowledge of agriculture. Teachers in country districts could deal more effectively with the children if they had some knowledge of agriculture. He noted with satisfaction that the department were proposing to supply seed to teachers in country districts, who were prepared to have it planted and attended by the children. That would be a great advantage to the children. The department were wise in limiting the expenditure in that direction at first, but they could easily increase it if they found teachers taking an interest in it. In paragraph 36 the report stated—

I am strongly opposed to the cadets being required to provide their own uniforms. My views on this question, together with a suggestion that each cadet be allowed at least 10s. per annum for uniform, have been forwarded to the Federal Prime Minister.

In the following paragraph the report said—

For several years the control of the cadets has been vested in the Commonwealth through its State Commandant; but, in order to induce the various States to co-operate by affording facilities for both teachers and scholars to obtain the necessary training and instruction, the scheme provides that the whole cadet organisation of each State shall be under the control of its Education Department.

If the whole cadet organisation was to be under the control of the Education Department he would like to know if the Minister proposed to do what was stated in paragraph 35 with reference to providing uniforms. Lately attention had been called in the metropolitan Press to the insanitary condition of some of the State schools, and he was not much surprised at it when it was noted that the floor space allowed was only 8 square feet per pupil. If a private employer were to allow only 8 square feet for his employees there would be a great howl of indignation. That floor space might be sufficient in a cold climate, but in a climate like that of Queensland a greater space was necessary. Paragraph 53 stated—

The establishment of a training college for teachers has been under consideration, and the department has prepared a scheme for the purpose.

He hoped that the scheme would soon be submitted to Parliament in a definite form by means of a Bill. This question had been before the department for something like twenty-five years; and after twenty-five years' consideration the time had arrived when something practical should be done. Paragraph 57 of the report declared that there were seventy-seven schools in which the attendance warranted that they should be superseded by State schools. In a subsequent paragraph the Minister pointed out reasons why they had not been converted into State schools. He said—

Some of the schools are in charge of Provisional teachers who are exceptionally popular and competent, and as the parents do not desire to lose their services, they do not wish State schools to be established, and will not raise the local contributions.

He would like to know in how many cases the people had refused to provide the local contributions, and in how many cases they had expressed their willingness to do so? The paragraphs dealing with the attendance of children were very interesting. Notwithstanding that

there ought to be an increase in population, they were told there was a decrease of 884 on the net enrolment for 1904 in the State schools, and an increase of 650 in Provisional schools. The report said—

These figures seem to indicate that people are leaving the large centres and settling in the agricultural and mining districts.

He did not draw the same conclusions from the figures. He thought the decrease in the attendance at State schools was due to the fact that a great many children were not attending school who ought to be in attendance. He would also like an explanation from the Minister as to why the cost per pupil had risen in 1905 from £4 1s. 10d. to £4 6s. 6d. He was very pleased to note that excellent work had been done in regard to technical education by the department. He meant, of course, in regard to organisation. They could not expect any man to get a sub-department into effective working order in a few months; but the inspector had done good work in regard to organisation since his appointment, and next year the department ought to be able to show good practical results. On the whole the report was most satisfactory, and they ought to be very well pleased that the work was being done so effectively. At the same time he hoped they were not going to be satisfied with the measure of success that had been attained; but that they would push on much more than they had been doing in the past, and that they would endeavour also to do greater things so far as higher education was concerned.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): The hon. member for Toowoomba seemed to be on his native heath in regard to this question, though he could not give him credit for knowing much about the conditions prevailing in the dairying districts. He did not think the hon. member had anything to do with dairying. He certainly had not given the Committee the real facts regarding the children who had to work in the dairying industry. The time the dairying was done was before the children left for school and after they came home in the afternoon; and it was during these hours in the morning, and not during school hours, that the children were employed, so that it did not interfere with their attendance at school. He noticed that the parties who were getting rises in the department were not the men who had to do the work. He did not see that the men who merely sat down and signed papers should be the only ones to get increases. Those who really did the work—the workers in the hive—were the men who ought to have the increased remuneration. Right through the Estimates it was plain to every hon. member that the small men were not getting their just reward. He was not saying that the heads of the department should not receive consideration. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Estimates had been a school teacher himself, and he must have his own views upon this subject. He had no doubt the hon. gentleman had done remarkably good work, and he should have some sympathy for others who did not receive the remuneration to which they had a right. While he did not object to their getting fair remuneration for their services, he did object *in toto* to the smaller men not getting a wage which would feed a bandicoot.

Mr. KENNA (*Bowen*): With reference to the retirement of Mr. Kerr, whenever the retirement of an officer on account of age had been decided upon they always heard the same argument—that his services should have been retained. There was no doubt that a great deal could be said in favour of retaining the services of a man who retained his faculties in full vigour, and who was to all intents and purposes

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an able and competent officer with a good deal of experience behind him. But there was another phase of the matter—a phase which the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba did not concern himself about. If they were going to retain beyond the age limit all public servants who had been in the department for years and years, what were they going to do with the middle-aged and younger men? He spoke from considerable experience in the public service, and he knew that the idea embedded in the minds of those who were charged with the administration of the various departments was that seniority only should be the claim for promotion. When he was an officer in the Post and Telegraph Department, the only opportunity anyone had of rising in that department was that an officer above him should die or resign. When such an event took place, everybody below was lifted up. Where seniority only was the ground of promotion, the able, energetic young man, who did half as much work again as the senior officer alongside him, would become mechanical, and would watch the clock, so that he might get free from the office as soon as possible. If they were going to keep the service from stagnation, and were going to give encouragement to the young men to rise to the top of the ladder, irrespective of the number of years others might have been in the service, or they themselves might have been in the service, they must do away entirely with the played-out old doctrine that seniority was the only ground for promotion. It was no doubt a hardship for a man like Mr. Kerr to have to retire; but when they looked at the matter from the other point of view, they would see that men lower down in the service should be given an opportunity of rising. A man of experience was, in some cases, a more able man than a man of lesser experience, but there were many cases in which a man of lesser experience was infinitely more able than a man of greater experience. Referring now to another matter, he wished to state that mothers of girls attending schools in his district had complained to him that while they did not in any way reflect on the characters of the young men teachers who were engaged in country schools, they thought it was advisable that the department should appoint female teachers to isolated schools in preference to male teachers. He was aware that it was a delicate touch to ask a girl to go to a far outlying place.

Mr. O'KEEFFE: They are asked to go there too often.

Mr. KENNA: He admitted that, but there was the other side to the question, and mothers had spoken to him very feelingly on the matter. Last year he brought before the department the necessity of making some change in the architecture of their schools. The architecture of many of the schools which he had visited was not at all suitable to this climate. As the leader of the Opposition had interjected, the architecture was modelled upon the style of English schools thirty-five years ago. The long narrow windows, partly closed with shutters, and the overhanging eaves, which shut out the light and air, were very objectionable in this hot climate, especially in places where children suffered from shortsightedness. He was glad to learn from Mr. Brady that all the more modern schools were being built upon an improved plan, as, for instance, the Hamilton and other schools which had been built during the past few years, which were a very great departure from the obsolete and unsuitable style of architecture that had previously obtained. In the Western part of Queensland where the climate was dry, hot, and arid, where the flies were a continual pest, and where so many children suffered from blight and eye affections

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brought about by the flies, the school should be more airy and commodious, and should be rendered fly-proof with mosquito net or some other substance. The style of architecture that was suited for North Queensland was not at all suited for Stanthorpe, and the style of architecture that was suited for dry Western Queensland was not at all suited for the coast districts, where they had a fair rainfall. He hoped the department would give attention to this matter and endeavour to make the buildings more sanitary, more commodious, better lighted, and more open to the air and sunlight than they had been in the past.

Mr. HAWTHORN (*Enoggera*): With reference to the retirement of Mr. Kerr, he regretted that that gentleman had been compelled to retire, but it was very satisfactory to know that there was a prospect of Mr. Kerr being able to earn a very good living by undertaking a private school. This incident emphasised very strongly the necessity for the Government doing something in the way of a superannuation fund. Had there been a superannuation fund in existence, there would have been no necessity for Mr. Kerr, or any other officer in a similar position, to look around to see if he could find a way of earning a living, because he would be able to get from that fund sufficient to enable him to live in comfort during his declining years. He hoped that one of the first things the Government would do next session would be to bring in a superannuation scheme. It would require a certain amount of endowment, certainly, but nevertheless he thought such a fund should be established. He was pleased to notice that all the junior officers in this department, except the messenger, were participating in the increases of salaries which were granted from £10 up to £20. He hoped that those increases would be continued, because nothing was more discouraging to junior officers than to find that years went by without their obtaining any increase. With regard to the new schedule, he noticed that it was working very well. Mr. District Inspector Shirley said—

Head teachers and the best of the assistants have been vigorously at work during the year acquiring the additional information required to make their teaching a success. Men occupying the highest rank in the service have been seen at special classes, just as keen and interested as the youngest student. The matter was put tersely and forcibly by an experienced head teacher, who assured me that he had "spent more time in study this year than in any previous seven years."

This was a complete justification, if any were needed, of the new schedule, as it showed that it was successful. It also emphasised the need there was for a University or a training college for teachers. He was pleased to see that technical education was going on very well under the new inspector. On page 3 of his report the inspector said—

If the tangible results of education are to be ours, the general necessity for education must be realised. To the attainment of this end, every factor determining to any extent public opinion on the matter is of the utmost importance.

On page 4, he said—

One would wish to see each college an index of the industries of its district. The State is too large, and, with perhaps the sole exception of Brisbane, the centres are too small to attempt instruction in subjects that may not be industrially applicable within hundreds of miles.

He further said—

The younger generation in the capital city of Brisbane go eventually to labour in all parts of the State. Here, therefore, consideration of district industry is less necessary. As far as is practicable, training possibilities should be of the widest scope; the whole State should come within the purview of the management.

Those remarks were very much to the point. With regard to the late outbreak of diphtheria in and around Brisbane, he thought it had shown the necessity for a more particular inspection of the schools, if what they had heard was correct. There seemed to be a certain amount of overcrowding in some schools, and there did not seem to be sufficient provision made for light. Last night it was stated at the Ithaca Shire Council meeting that the number of pupils at the Kelvin Grove State School was largely in excess of what it should properly accommodate, and that the school was not situated in a healthy position. The department might see that full and proper inspection was made of all schools, so that in no school should there be a larger number of children than space was provided for. The Tasmanian Government had lately instructed the Chief Health Officer, Dr. Elkington, to make a medical examination of the children attending State schools in Hobart and Campbelltown. According to the Press reports of his conclusions—

In describing the origin and general scope of the inquiry, the Chief Health Officer states that in May last he addressed to the Chief Secretary a request to put into practice a scheme for the physical examination of children attending State schools in Hobart. That scheme formed a further step in the systematic work of school hygiene originally initiated by the Department of Health in 1904.

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In concluding the introductory paragraphs of the report the Chief Health Officer points out that, as far as Australia is concerned, this examination has, so to speak, broken new ground.

Reference was then made to the physical measurements of the children, and to acquired physical deformity—

I have no hesitation in stating my positive opinion that the greater part of this serious condition of affairs as regards lateral curvature of the spine, particularly in girls, is due to defective lighting and deskting. The merest superficial observation of the attitudes into which so many children are literally forced by these agencies, against which, despite repeated reiteration of their dangers, teachers in general appear to take little or no precaution . . . will convince anyone with the most elementary knowledge of the plasticity of the child-frame that this contention is well founded. . . . Until some better arrangement is made whereby the long desk and form can be utterly abolished—at any rate from the lower classes—and the lighting materially improved . . . this serious condition of affairs must continue to manufacture weak backs for the torment of womankind, and to the damage of the present and future race.

It is possible to trace . . . a very definite connection between defective lighting and poor sight, varying remarkably with the degree of lighting, but with no other ascertainable factor.

The report generally was a good one, and it showed many defects which existed in the schools in Tasmania, and which he was sure existed in schools in Queensland. He thought the department should take this matter into consideration and give directions that improvements should be made in the matters to which he had referred.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): Anyone who filled the position of Director of Education of this department, which cost the State £350,000 a year, and who had been forty years in the service as Mr. Ewart had been, could not but be satisfied that that officer was well worthy of the increase he had received. With regard to the Under Secretary, every hon. member would agree with the Minister that he was justly entitled to the increase of £100 which had been given him. It would not be possible to get a man more competent to do the work of the department in its every detail than Mr. Story. He felt certain that while the Under Secretary had got this increase the salary was not likely to remain at

that amount, because he deserved a further increase. The accountant was the only man in the Chief Office who had not received an increase. He would like to know the reason for that. He did not know the man, but he entered the service in 1870, so that for thirty-six years he had been in the service, and he was getting £400 a year. He did not object very much to the amount, but Mr. Drane had a larger salary than that two years ago. In 1904 there was £50 taken off his salary, which reduced him to £380, and it had since been increased by £20, bringing him up to £400. When a man had been in the service for twenty-five or thirty years, the Home Secretary would agree with him that to knock off £50 was too much. It was pleasing to see that Mr. Drane had got back another £20 last year, but at the least his salary should be restored to what it was prior to the reduction two years ago. He hoped the Home Secretary would bring it under the notice of the Minister for Public Instruction, and see if Mr. Drane could not have his old salary restored. Anyone who knew Mr. Kerr, including his old pupils throughout Queensland, would bear out the opinion that had been expressed that he was an excellent man to have in charge of the Normal State School. There was a certain amount of truth in the argument that had been raised that when a man got to a certain age, although his ability had not been impaired, and he was as competent as ever he was, there was a time when men coming to that time of life must retire. He would like to know from the Home Secretary if Mr. Kerr's successor had been appointed?

The HOME SECRETARY: No.

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course the pupils of that school were now having six or seven weeks' holiday, and he presumed the appointment would not be filled just now, but he would like to know if it was the intention of the Government to appoint a stop-gap to the position until a suitable man to take charge of the school turned up? There were any number of men in the service of the department who were capable of filling that position. In reading over the most interesting report that had been furnished, he saw a reference to the itinerant teacher, and if there was a man who had earned his salary, at a small cost to the country, it was Mr. Walpole. That officer had travelled over a long distance and looked after 304 children, and the total expense to the State amounted to only £330—a little over £1 per head. He noticed that since then two other itinerant teachers had been appointed, and he was sure they would do very good work. Paragraph 14 of the report read as follows:—

Some misapprehension seems to exist in regard to the present compulsory school age in Queensland. It appears to be believed by many people that a child may be excluded from school when he has reached twelve, but that he is not permitted to go to work until he is fourteen.

He was inclined to think that it would not be a bad idea to increase the number of days which children should be compelled to attend school in a year, but he did not know that it would be a wise thing just now to increase the age limit from twelve to fourteen. Further on the report stated that out of a total enrolment of 106,329 the daily average attendance was 68,780. That was an enormous difference—something like 40,000 less than the actual number on the rolls. It stood to reason, from those figures, that there must be a large number of children kept away from school. Although the average attendance showed an increase of 119 on the average daily attendance for 1904, there was ample room for improvement in this direction. When they found a daily average attendance of 68,000 out

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of a total enrolment of 106,320, it was too large altogether, and the Government should increase the number of days of compulsory attendance. If the Government tried it for twelve months to see how it would act, he had not the slightest doubt that the average would increase very much more. In connection with Provisional schools attaining the average to entitle them to become State schools, he noticed in the report that there were seventy-seven such schools. The minimum average required was thirty, and there were fifty schools which were very near that limit. The Government were acting very wisely in not establishing them as State schools before seeing if the number of pupils was likely to increase, because it would mean a considerable expense to make them State schools, and in some instances they might revert back to Provisional schools again. Another matter he should like to refer to was paragraph 46, which mentioned the names of twenty-five schools that were closed during the year. In another paragraph he noticed that it said that steps were being taken to reopen some of the schools on the understanding that where an average attendance of at least twelve pupils could not be permanently maintained the department would pay part of the regulation salary of the teacher, and the parents would contribute the remaining portion, or arrange for a corresponding reduction in the cost of board and lodging.

The HOME SECRETARY: I understand that there are now one or two schools kept open where the attendance is less than twelve.

Mr. FORSYTH: They could not expect the Government to bear the full expense in a thing of that sort. He knew one or two schools where the parents were only too willing to subscribe towards the cost under such conditions. The Government should do their best to keep the schools open, but in some cases it could not be helped and they had to be closed. In cases where the schools were closed, some means should be provided whereby the buildings would be looked after. If the buildings were not looked after they might be burned down, and there was no insurance on them. If it was found that there was no possibility of the school being opened again, he presumed the Government would either try to dispose of them or shift them somewhere else. He noticed that the Government were erecting portable school buildings in some cases. That was a most excellent idea, because the buildings could be taken down easily and at a small expense, shifted somewhere else, and in that way it would save the Government a large amount of money. In Queensland they had mining districts to which a rush might take place, and there would be thirty or forty children there. A school would be erected, the field would turn out to be an unsatisfactory one, and the children would have to leave with their parents. They had to look out for things of that kind, and, if the schools were portable, the Government would be able to remove them at a little expense as possible. Reference was made in the report to the establishment of a training college. That had been referred to in previous reports, and he should now like to know what was the intention of the Government with regard to that matter. Paragraph 53 said—

The establishment of a training college for teachers has been under consideration, and the department has prepared a scheme for the purpose. The establishment of the college will depend upon the condition of the public finances.

The public finances were in an exceedingly satisfactory state, and if it depended on the state of the public finances, then the establishment of the training college should be an assured thing, as it

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was certain that the Treasurer would have a big surplus at the end of the financial year next June. He hoped, therefore, that the money would be provided for the purpose. Another matter to which he should like to refer was paragraph 75, which read as follows:—

I greatly regret that, owing to the state of the public finances, promotions in classification of teachers, involving increase of salary, had to remain in abeyance for the year, as for the two previous years. In response, however, to representations, lists were published in the *Education Office Gazette* for November, showing the names of teachers whose promotion has been approved.

Then paragraphs 76, 77, and 78 gave the lists of classifications, and paragraph 79 read as follows:—

The promotion of the teachers named in these lists, though approved by the Minister, has not been submitted to the Governor in Council, conveys no legal standing, and implies no claim for increase of emoluments until the financial circumstances of the State are in a position to meet the obligation, from which date, and not from any previous date, salaries will be paid, according to the classification then reached, after approval by the Governor in Council.

He would like the Minister to say what was the intention of the Government with regard to the classification increases which these officers were deprived of in 1903 to 1905? They should no longer keep these people from their increases to which they were justly entitled, and he hoped the Minister would be able to give them a satisfactory reply on the matter.

Mr. NIELSON (*Musgrave*) would like to know from the Minister if any special consideration was to be given to teachers who were stationed away in the Western and North-western districts at long distances from the coast? Last year some consideration was promised by the department to teachers in the back blocks in the matter of time in connection with their summer holidays. Those near the coast were always better situated. In many cases it took teachers a week or more to get to the coast, let alone to the capital, and in many instances they were debarred from visiting the metropolis and other places where they wished to go. With regard to the innovation of providing portable buildings for some districts, he thought it was a good idea. He knew one mining field where the school was about to be closed, but there was revival, and the attendance was now about the same as it had previously been. There was another matter the Education Department might well study, that was the system of conveying pupils to the school in certain districts. There were country districts in Queensland

[5 p.m.] where there might be half a dozen schools within a radius of as many miles, and it would be much cheaper to run a motor bus service and bring the children to one large central school than to keep up expensive staffs in a number of schools. In some of those places the teaching staff ran into about £400 a year, and by having one large central school the teaching would be more efficient than if they had a number of smaller schools with one or two teachers. Such a system would not be applicable in every district, but, wherever it could be applied, it would pay financially and educationally.

* Mr. RANKIN (*Burrum*) congratulated the Minister on the very excellent report on the year's work. The first matter he wished to refer to was that of itinerant teachers. While admitting that the officer must have worked very hard during the year, the actual value of the work performed was somewhat problematical. If he visited 108 families during the year of 200 school days, the work done must have been rather ineffective, considering the large area that had to be traversed, and the small amount of time it was possible to devote to each family. Those who recognised

the disabilities under which families laboured in the back parts of the country must be pleased to see that provision was being made to increase the staff of such teachers. Another matter he wished to urge upon the department was an increase in the age at which children might be allowed to leave school. He had received several letters asking him to bring the matter forward, and he had seen the disadvantages of the present age limit, especially in country districts. Children might leave school at the age of twelve years, but they were not allowed, except under special permits, to be employed in a shop or factory until they were fourteen years of age. The same applied under the Mining Act. The result was that, just at the period in the career of a child when a master had an opportunity of bringing into flower the seed he had sown, the boy or girl was suddenly taken away from school and a great deal of the work was lost. That must be very distressing to teachers who had a genuine interest in their work, and they would assist in no small measure in helping the teachers to educate a class of citizens who would be a credit to the State if they increased the compulsory age for attendance at school to fourteen years. As soon as some children reached the age of twelve, they were taken away to work on farms. He could not speak for the dairying industry, but he could speak for the sugar industry. Owing to the altered conditions of labour in the sugar districts, it was not at all uncommon to see children of tender years doing manual labour in the cane-fields. That was another reason why they should increase the age of attendance at school. No doubt agricultural education was a very admirable thing, but he viewed it with very little favour. He knew of several schools where the master endeavoured to get the scholars to cultivate little plots. As this work had to be done after school hours, parents came to the conclusion that their children might as well do such work on their own farms; and that would constitute one of the chief drawbacks to any successful issue in connection with agricultural education. He should like to see a larger increase in the grant for schools of arts. In the more sparsely populated districts, where people had fewer opportunities of coming together for social and intellectual converse, schools of arts were of very high educational value.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would it not be better to discuss that on the vote for schools of arts?

Mr. RANKIN: Perhaps it would. Certainly an increase in that direction would be a very good thing. The question of the age limit of teachers had also been referred to, and the leader of the Opposition had made out a very strong case against the present system. Speaking the other night on the Estimates for the Department of Justice, he pointed out how the country lost the services of police magistrates, at the very time when they were of the greatest value to the State, by this compulsory retirement on attaining a certain age. Mr. Gladstone was Premier of England at the age of eighty-four—nearly twenty years after men were called upon to retire from the public service in Queensland—and the loss to the Empire would have been almost irreparable if he had been compelled to retire at the age of sixty-five, because his very best work was done during the last twenty years of his life. With regard to Provisional schools, it had been pointed out to him the other day that the State was sustaining a very great loss through not taking advantage of the services of people to whom they had given a higher education. Boys and girls who had matriculated with honours were not allowed to enter the Department of Public Instruction except as Provisional teachers.

He knew of one girl who had matriculated with honours, and who had taken the Fairfax prize, who found herself isolated in some out-back portion of the State, where she had no opportunity of giving those around her the benefit of the higher education she had been given at the expense of the State. She might just as well be lost as sent to a place where she had merely to teach the "three Rs." Such persons should be sent to more closely settled districts, where they would be of value in connection with social and educational institutions.

Mr. MANN: Whom would you send out to the country districts?

Mr. RANKIN: There were plenty who could be sent out to country districts, and who would be quite as competent for the work there as those possessed of higher qualifications. They should not educate a man for an eminent physician and then send him to drive a dray. He hoped the Minister would see if people with higher attainments could not be sent to districts where the knowledge they had acquired might shed a broader ray of intellectual light.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): When the hon. member for Musgrave advocated bringing children to school, he thought the hon. member had a cut-and-dried scheme for bringing children from centres where it would not pay to establish schools owing to the small number of children. There was no doubt it would be a great advantage to small communities where a handful of struggling selectors could not afford to erect a school, and where possibly there were not sufficient children to warrant the department opening a school. If any means could be devised to bring the children in such localities into schools, it would be a big step in the right direction, and that was more needed than the establishment of a University in Brisbane. The hon. member for Bowen said that it was advisable to send female teachers to districts where there were mixed schools, and that there were places where it was not fit for a girl to be sent. He could endorse that hon. member's remarks. He had seen letters from girl teachers who had been sent to rough mining camps, where they were compelled to live in hotels. They stated that their lives were like hell upon earth, and they did not believe in being forced to live where men came for periodic "drunks," where they were forced to listen to filthy language, and where they could not get proper rest. As far as possible, female teachers should be sent to places where they would have a refining influence upon the boys and girls. It was advisable to institute inquiries before sending girls to new mining camps.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Are miners such a lot of ruffians as you make them out to be?

Mr. MANN: They are not as bad as you are.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: If publicans like the hon. member would supply them with poisonous liquor, they would be pretty bad then.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: A nice character you are giving the miners.

Mr. LESINA: It is a slander on the miners of North Queensland. You are not fit to lick their boots. You are a sweater of kanakas.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Clermont had accused him of being a kanaka sweater. As he was registered for the white bounty, he would like the hon. member to inform the federal authorities that he was employing kanakas.

Mr. Mann.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members not to interject while the hon. member for Cairns is addressing the Committee. I hope he will ignore any interjections that are made.

Mr. MANN: He was quite satisfied. There was a good deal in the papers at present about the fear of infection in connection with State schools, and he believed the water supply was pretty bad in many places. He had received one or two letters from his electorate, and he would like if the department would make inquiries, and, if necessary, supply filters or other means of purifying the water. The hon. member for Burrum spoke of children being put to work in the cane-fields owing to the changed conditions in the sugar industry. A short time ago the hon. member used to "barrack" for the retention of the kanaka on the ground that white men could not do the work.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. RANKIN: You don't know anything about it.

Mr. MANN: He was taking the hon. member's word for it. He had heard of children being put to work weeding and trashing cane; but there were very few people who would put their children to do work that it required a grown man to do. The hon. member—possibly in his endeavours to get some labour for the cane-fields—had now gone back on the statements he made previously.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that he is now imputing motives to the hon. member for Burrum.

Mr. MANN: He might be imputing motives, but he was pointing out that the hon. member was now trying to remedy the mischief he had done in the past, and that he admitted that it was possible for even children to work in the cane-fields.

Mr. SOMERSET (*Stanley*): He quite agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Burrum as to the compulsory age of children. It was a great pity that children should be allowed to leave school at twelve years of age. This had a bearing on another matter, and that was the reduction of the classification of a school owing to a diminution in the attendance, which also meant a reduction in the teacher's salary. That was very unfair. In many cases excellent teachers did good work in a district for a number of years, and then, instead of getting a higher salary, they suffered a reduction in their remuneration because the attendance had diminished. Circumstances, and not the teachers, were to blame for the smaller attendance, and it was hardly fair that the teacher should be made to suffer on that account. The number of children attending a school should not determine the classification, but once a school had attained a certain classification that classification should be retained—at all events, the salary of the teacher should not be reduced. He thought that it would be a good thing to increase the compulsory age from twelve to fourteen years.

Mr. PAULL (*Charters Towers*): There seemed to be an idea in the minds of some hon. members, as well as in the minds of people outside, that children were compelled to leave school when they attained the age of twelve years. On this point he would quote what the Minister stated in paragraph 14 of his report, which was as follows:—

Some misapprehension seems to exist in regard to the present compulsory school age in Queensland. It appears to be believed by many people that a child may be excluded from school when he has reached twelve, but that he is not permitted to go to work until he is fourteen. The facts are that a child cannot be excluded

until he has reached fifteen; that children of the age of thirteen or fourteen may, with the consent of the Minister for Works, be employed in any factory; and that there is no restriction upon the employment of children in shops or offices which are not connected with factories.

Mr. REINHOLD: You cannot compel them to go to school after they are twelve.

Mr. PAULL: Some of the largest and best schools in Queensland were in his electorate, but, unfortunately, the accommodation at those schools was not all that could be desired. The schoolroom was full, the veranda was full, and the children had often to be taken outside because the accommodation was insufficient. Inspector Mutch made the following observations in his report:—

The accommodation at Quenton, Charters Towers Central (Girls), and Millicester is insufficient; but, as soon as funds are available, a school will be established at Mossman Park, and with that it is to be hoped that the attendance will be so redistributed as to improve the material conditions of these schools.

The local contribution towards the erection of a school at Mossman Park had been subscribed for some twelve months, and he would urge upon the department the necessity for taking this work in hand at an early date. He should like to call attention to a scholar of the Millicester school of whom they were very proud. The Minister, in his report, made the following reference to this very promising pupil:—

Information has just been received that the competition has been won by Andrew Phillips, a pupil in the State school at Millicester, Charters Towers. It is highly gratifying that the first competition should have been won by a Queensland scholar; and it is interesting and satisfactory to learn that our pupils are able to compete successfully with pupils in other parts of the Empire.

This was a matter which he thought was worthy of being brought under the notice of the House. But what he specially rose for was to call attention to an injustice in connection with teachers stationed in the tropical parts of the State. Some power should be provided for the compulsory removal of a teacher from one part of the State to another. Queensland was, so to speak, divided into two climates. From his experience of Brisbane, it was a temperate climate—certainly a very different climate from that in the tropics. He had noticed from official reports in the Press that from the middle of August last there had rarely been a day when the temperature in the Northern part of the State had been under 92 degrees, and during the last two months at Richmond, Georgetown, and other places it had been up to 102 degrees. They could not expect teachers, especially lady teachers, to work in a climate like that for eight or nine years without suffering somewhat in health, and yet some of them were kept in those districts for ten and fifteen years. One lady teacher had been up there for twenty years, and all her friends were in Brisbane. He understood that there was no power which required the heads of the department to create a vacancy down here for the transfer of a teacher from the North.

Mr. TOLMIE: They can do it every half hour of the day if they wish.

Mr. PAULL: The Minister told him there was no power to move a single person against his will, but that they might disrate the teacher.

The HOME SECRETARY: You must have misunderstood him.

Mr. PAULL: No, he did not misunderstand him. The Minister pointed out that the only way in which it could be done was by one teacher being willing to effect an exchange with another in the same position, or by a teacher coming down here from the North at a lower salary.

[*Mr. Mann.*]

What he desired was that provision should be made for effecting such changes at regular intervals, so that officers in the Southern parts of the State should do a fair share of the work in the tropics.

* Mr. REINHOLD (*Brisbane South*) was very glad to see that the term "acting" had been taken away from the titles of the Under Secretary and the registrar. He had no doubt that those officers deserved all the increases that were given to them, but he must again express his dissatisfaction with these £100 rises. He was against £100 rises every time they appeared, as he did not think there was any reason for them. He was very sorry to see that a vacancy had occurred among the inspectors through the death of Mr. Platt, who had been an old and valued servant of the department. He should like to know whether this position was to be filled, because he was sure that those below Mr. Platt were now expecting to get a step higher.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would suggest to the hon. member that he is now going into details which can be better dealt with on the next vote.

Mr. REINHOLD: Very well, he would not pursue that subject. The suggestion had been made that when a school reached a certain classification it should be kept at that classification. He did not think that would work, because many schools which had been ranked as Class II. or Class III. had dropped back again to Class IV. or Class V.; but he thought the department might increase the number of classes, which would afford some relief. At the present time a teacher in charge of a school having an attendance of 281 would lose £40 in salary if the attendance dropped to 280. That was too much for any man to lose, owing to a matter for which he was in no way responsible. With reference to the retirement of teachers who had reached a certain age, he should like to ask whether it was the intention of the Government to make the rule with reference to retirement apply all round in every branch of the public service, because if that was not the intention he objected to the rule being enforced in individual cases. If the rule was not to be applied in every case it should not be applied at all. He should be satisfied to see the rule wiped out, and every individual in the service allowed to hang on as long as he could. He should also like to know whether the allowance for extra cost of living was granted according to any specified scale or rule. Complaints had been made to him that in cases which were not far apart, and in which the circumstances were practically the same, one teacher received a smaller allowance than another, and that even in cases where one teacher succeeded another, while the old officer was allowed £20 his successor was only allowed £10. It had also been pointed out to him that there was some difference made with regard to the travelling allowance.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is now dealing with items which are specified in the next vote, and I think it would be better if the hon. member deferred his remarks on those items until we come to that vote.

Mr. REINHOLD: Yes. What he was going to say was that some teachers were allowed so much for the carriage of books, while other teachers received no such allowance. With regard to the remark that schools were wanted in outlying districts more than a University, that might possibly be true, but there was a better way of looking at the matter than that. We wanted all the boys and girls in this State to have the opportunity, as far as we could give it to them, to get to the top of the tree without going outside of the State. This opportunity

could be provided at very little expense and with very little trouble. The difficulty with regard to schools in outlying districts was being supplied at the present time to a certain extent by the appointment of itinerant teachers, the value of whose work one hon. member who had spoken during the afternoon was inclined to doubt. He thought that hon. member did not understand the position—that he was of opinion that these itinerant teachers were doing the work of teaching, whereas they were only doing the organising, and setting the work for somebody else to do, which they afterwards came along and examined. According to this hon. gentleman it simply meant that the itinerant teachers were about two days in each home during the year. Then there was the question of a training college for teachers. He felt sure that they would have had something definite in the shape of a training college in some small way by this time. He understood that it was coming along, but they were now dealing with the Estimates and had heard not a word about the training college.

Mr. TOLMIE: The matter is still under consideration.

Mr. REINHOLD: He would like to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that there was only £150 down for the instruction of the blind. It was about time the department took over the salaries of all the teachers in the deaf, dumb, and blind schools. The orphanages report had been referred to, and he did not think the mothers of the orphan children had been treated quite as well as they might be in the matter of allowance for board for their children. (Hear, hear!) They had got one step advance—that mothers were allowed to board their children and get paid by the department. But they wanted to get a further step, and give the mothers something more reasonable than it was proposed to give them at present. The Secretary for Public Instruction might be able to give the Committee some idea as to what were the intentions of the department with regard to the Normal State School, of which the head teachership would become vacant at the beginning of the year—whether it was proposed to put a head teacher in place of Mr. Kerr, or whether it was proposed to pull down the present buildings, as suggested some time ago, sell part of the land and build offices for the Railway Department with the proceeds. He would now deal with some of the numerous things which were dealt with at the last Teachers' Conference, which seemed to him to be somewhat important and that had not received the consideration due to them. First of all he noticed the teachers again asked for a map of the locality in which their school was situated. The matter of maps seemed a very small one, but the strange thing was that in most of the schools they had maps of parts of the world remote from Queensland but no map of the district. He thought that was pretty general in all the schools, except the head teacher supplied a map himself. The conference had again drawn attention to the desirableness of the department producing its own reading books for use in schools. He commended that idea to the Minister, as he did not see why they should depend on other countries for the books out of which they taught the children in the schools.

Mr. TOLMIE: We had an Australian series.

Mr. REINHOLD: It was just as much a borrowed series as the Royal Readers or any others in use. Another small grievance with head teachers was that their word had occasionally—in accordance with the regulations of the department—to be verified by a member of the school committee. That was not a nice position to place a head teacher in.

Mr. J. LEAHY: In connection with what?

Mr. Reinhold.]

Mr. REINHOLD: Mostly in connection with the time the head teacher might be absent from school. If he were sick he had to get a verification from the committee to say that he was sick; but nine times out of ten the committee did not see him, and how could they verify that he was sick? That was a provision that ought to be taken out of the regulations. Then there was the one-fifth contribution, on which subject the Minister had been interviewed but they had not got much satisfaction out of the interview. He would impress upon the Minister that the matter of collecting the one-fifth to establish a school or to increase the accommodation in the school should be done away with.

Mr. BURROWS: It has been done away with.

Mr. REINHOLD: Not by any means. Then there was a regulation in the Public Service Act which permitted public servants to get six months' leave on full pay after they had served twenty years. That regulation had been suspended for some years, and it seemed to him a direct breach of contract with those teachers and other public servants who entered the service on the understanding that when they had served twenty years they would get six months' leave on full pay. The conference drew attention to the matter, and he thought it was time the long service clause was reinstated or that the suspension was taken off. Clause 87 was also dealt with, and that clause had been dealt with by a resolution of the House, but nothing had been done in the matter of putting teachers generally on a better footing than they would be so long as clause 87 stood. He would also like to ask the Minister if there was any hope of a public service superannuation scheme being instituted? The public servants had some promise that a scheme would be instituted, or that the Government were considering a scheme; and the public servants were very anxious, especially the teachers, to know if anything had been done in the matter. There was also a matter in connection with which he asked the Minister some questions a few days ago, and he did not want any misunderstanding about it. He referred to head teachers not allowing their assistants to sit down. He did not want to reflect on any head teacher who did not come under those questions, but he wanted those head teachers who were inhuman enough to keep their assistants standing all day, and not allowing them to sit down, to know the exact position in which they stood towards the department. He knew of a head teacher who locked up every chair in his school, so that none of his assistants could sit down any minute of the day. He also knew of a head teacher who would not allow his female assistants to sit down, even when teaching needlework. He knew some of those female assistants, and one in particular; and if that girl was injured for life, or died, he maintained that the head teacher would be responsible for it.

Mr. JENKINSON: You are equally responsible if you are an accomplice. You don't even give the name.

Mr. REINHOLD: He knew what he was responsible for in that matter without any instructions from the hon. member for Fassifern. Many years ago there was an instruction issued to head teachers that assistant teachers and pupil-teachers were not prohibited from sitting down during school hours. That circular seemed to have got out of date, and he thought it would be desirable that a similar circular be sent to all the schools so that assistant teachers would know the head teacher had no right to make them stand all day.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): He would like to refer to the matter to which the hon. member

[*Mr. Reinhold.*]

for South Brisbane had just mentioned—the alteration in what they might call the orphanage allowance.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is a special vote for that later on.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He understood that. What he referred to was the principle, not the vote later on. When the hon. member for South Brisbane was speaking, of course there was no vote later on.

The HOME SECRETARY: He was called to order.

Mr. MACARTNEY thought the Minister would spend more time in raising objections than if he (Mr. Macartney) were allowed to proceed. It struck him as an extraordinary thing that the Minister, who was so much in favour of the poor of this State, should give other persons more than he gave the mothers.

The HOME SECRETARY: The mother got nothing from your party.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He did not understand the hon. gentleman. It was an extraordinary thing that, while the Government were prepared to pay 6s. per week for children to strangers, they were only prepared to pay 2s. 6d. per week to the mothers. While they were prepared to pay 18s. per week for three children to strangers, they were only prepared to pay 7s. 6d. per week to a mother who took care of her own children. If it was right to make the allowance at all—if it was a proper thing to do—the mother should be paid as much as a stranger for looking after her own children. He thought common sense and justice and their natural feelings demanded that there should be no differentiation such as that between the mother and an entire stranger. He should like the Home Secretary, when he was replying, to make some explanation why this distinction should be drawn. He was glad to see that the Acting Under Secretary, Mr. Story, had been confirmed in the position of Under Secretary. Mr. Story was a most deserving officer, and he was glad to see that his services had been recognised. At the same time, it was a matter of comment that the persons immediately surrounding the Minister received a recognition which was not given to a number of officers in subdepartments which were not so closely associated with the administration of the Minister. They found in the first vote there were increases to every officer in the department with the exception of the accountant, Mr. Drane, whose salary was reduced some time ago. No reason had been given for the reduction in Mr. Drane's salary, but the fact remained that in the Head Office there had been a general increase in the salaries, while in the other branches there was an absence of any recognition of the services of the officers. He thought that was to be deplored. They should give every officer in the service recognition of his services, quite apart from those more immediately associated with the Minister. He would like the Minister to give some official announcement of the intention of the Government in regard to the one-fifth contribution towards repairs and extensions to buildings. The matter was brought up on the Estimates of the Works Department by several hon. members, but no notice was taken of it by the Secretary for Works, probably because he was not altogether responsible. He thought it was due to the hon. members who raised the question that they should have some official announcement on the subject.

The HOME SECRETARY: As regarded the question of the one-fifth contribution, the Government had already taken one step in that

direction by abolishing that contribution. At present there was no one-fifth contribution demanded for repairs and painting.

Mr. REINHOLD : That is ten years old.

The HOME SECRETARY : It was the intention of the Government to so amend the regulations at an early date so that the one-fifth contribution for additions to State schools would no longer be required, so that the only contribution required in the future would be the one-fifth which was demanded on the erection of a new State school. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. J. LEAHY : Nothing would be required then for the erection of a Provisional school? You only said State schools.

The HOME SECRETARY : He should have said State and Provisional schools. There would be the usual one-fifth. Amendments would shortly be made in the regulations so that the term "State schools" would include what were now known as Provisional schools, so that they would have the advantage of a better class of teachers. He did not think they could wipe out the Provisional schools altogether, because there might be cases, such as new mining fields, where such schools might be required for, say, twelve or eighteen months. The intention was to so classify the State schools so as to do what they did in New South Wales—wipe out the large Provisional schools and classify them as State schools. The leader of the Opposition brought up the case of the head teacher of the Normal State School, who was retiring. He must say that anyone who had come in contact with that gentleman would recognise that he was a man of exceptional zeal and exceptional ability, but he had attained the age of seventy years, and had been asked to retire. As a matter of fact, he had been retained for some months after he was seventy years of age, and he would get the usual six months' leave on full pay. He (Mr. Airey) had worked beside Mr. Kerr for five or six years, and had nothing but the kindest recollections of him. The rule in the public service was that men must retire when they attained the age of seventy years.

Mr. REINHOLD : That is not always done.

The HOME SECRETARY : As far as he knew, no exception had been made during the time he had been a Minister. Mr. Kerr would be nominally head teacher [7 p.m.] of the Normal State School until the 30th June next. It had been asked what were the intentions of the Government in regard to that school. He had not the slightest hesitation in telling the Committee that it was recognised that that school was in a position where a State school, in the present state of the traffic, should not be. (Hear, hear!) It was entirely out of place, and, as a matter of fact, it existed by drawing children from the various surrounding districts that, properly speaking, should be going to their own district schools. In nine cases out of ten when a man attained the age of seventy years he was on the down grade. There were cases here and there of men who retained their vigour to even eighty and had distinguished themselves, but such cases were exceptionally rare.

Hon. R. PHILP : We had one teacher eighty-one years of age.

The HOME SECRETARY : Yes; and the exception generally proved the rule. Then there was this other phase of the question to which they could not shut their eyes : There were in the service a number of middle-aged men, who had toiled hard for many years awaiting promotion, and these men were kept back because other men older than themselves—

Mr. BURROWS : Do not die.

The HOME SECRETARY : No; he would not say that. But these older men occupied these best positions. The leader of the Opposition suggested that some arrangement might be come to whereby the men who retired might be given charge of small schools. That was open to the great objection that a man who had to take charge of a small school might have a great deal more hard personal work to do than a man in charge of a big school; he would have all the "graft" to do and no one to assist him. As to the question of retaining a man of seventy years of age because he was a man of exceptional vigour and ability, that raised the question how were they to decide? Were they to take a medical certificate, or to allow his friends to judge for him, or leave Parliament to decide—what were they to do? The conclusion they had come to—to fix a certain age at which a public servant should be compelled to retire without exception—was, on the whole, a very wise one. The hon. member for Toowoomba referred to the consolidation of the existing system of education. He (Mr. Airey) hoped that in the near future they would see if they could not bring all branches of the education system under the control of the State. Everyone must admit that the present condition of the Grammar schools, although they were run in some respects with a very high degree of efficiency, he could not but think that if they were under the control of the Department of Public Instruction it would be better for the Grammar schools and better for the State. He hoped to see the day when all the details of their education system would be linked up together—when their Provisional schools had a chance of becoming classified schools, and their Grammar schools, and very possibly in the near future, their University also, all linked together and forming parts of one coherent whole. Reference had been made to the itinerant teachers, and there was some misunderstanding with regard to the work of these teachers. The itinerant teacher did not merely go round and distribute books and teaching material, and confine himself to that. He initiated—if he might use the word—a system of education. He would remain in one place for a few days or a week and try to ground the children in some form of education before he passed on to the next place. He laid the foundation for something better to come. He was not saying the system of itinerant teachers was all that might be desired. It was a poor substitute for a Provisional school, but in those places where people were not able to get a Provisional school and could not find enough children to justify the employment of a permanent teacher, the itinerant teacher was an undisputed blessing. The Government had made arrangements for the employment of an itinerant teacher in the Centre, and an additional one in the North. The question had been raised as to the advisability of amending the school age. The present age for compulsory attendance was from six to twelve years. It might possibly be a mistake to fix the compulsory age at six years; it might be wiser, perhaps, to raise it to seven, and put the extra year at the other end, making it thirteen or fourteen instead of twelve. He agreed with the hon. member for Toowoomba, who stated that the number of days which a child was compelled to attend school were not sufficient. He did not think that sixty days in the half-year were enough; it might be wiser to raise the number to eighty. With regard to the conversion of Provisional schools into State schools, last year no less than thirty new Provisional schools were opened; four Provisional schools were converted into State schools, and at the present time there were six applications in for other Provisional schools. There was necessity sometimes for a certain amount of hesitancy

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on the part of the department before a Provisional school could be converted into a State school. The uncertainty as to whether a town is going to increase or not rendered it advisable to "hasten slowly." The hon. member for Bowen referred to the question of male teachers being sent to country places where women teachers ought to be sent. The reason was that there were scores of country places in Queensland where they could not send a female teacher, as there was no proper accommodation. In some cases the surroundings were almost shocking. A man might manage to put up with them, but the idea of sending a female teacher to some places he knew of, was simply a farce.

Mr. KENNA : That was not my complaint at all. I said male teachers were sent to mixed schools where female teachers would be preferable.

The HOME SECRETARY : There was no doubt that a female teacher would be preferable, but what could they do? In places where female teachers were sent, the Government made inquiries as to whether suitable accommodation could be provided. He quite agreed that if the accommodation was better, female teachers would be sent in many cases. A point had been raised in connection with keeping open Provisional schools. As hon. members were aware, if the attendance was under twelve the school was supposed to be closed, but he knew several cases where the Provisional schools were kept open after the attendance had gone down to ten, nine—

Mr. TURNER : It is eight in some cases.

Mr. HAMILTON : Six at Birdsville.

Hon. R. PHILP : One family at Flat-top Island.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member for Carpentaria raised the question of the promotion of teachers. He could assure hon. members now that all teachers were receiving salary equivalent to their rank. In some cases it implied a single grade promotion; in other cases it meant a double grade promotion. At any rate, teachers at the present time were receiving pay equal to their classification. With regard to the question of establishing a training college, the Education Department had already got a scheme perfected for the establishment of that institution. The need for it was self-evident, but it was simply a question of finance. As hon. members would observe, there was an increase in the Estimates of £20,000 over that of the preceding year. He could not say precisely what a training college would cost, but the Government would not be justified at this juncture in increasing the Estimates more than £20,000.

Mr. FORSYTH : What would a training college cost?

The HOME SECRETARY : He had not got the figures with him; but he would get the information, and supply it to the hon. member later on.

Mr. J. LEAHY : Is it absolutely necessary? Would you take this House as a model?

The PREMIER : It is very desirable.

The HOME SECRETARY : As to the absolute necessity of the training college he was not prepared to say just now; but he was decidedly of opinion than an institution like a training college would be of great advantage.

Mr. J. LEAHY : I did not think they were as stupid as you make out. I thought they were rather an intelligent class.

The HOME SECRETARY : Anyone with any knowledge of the men in charge of the schools must come to the conclusion that they

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were an efficient body of men and they discharged their duties with considerable credit to themselves and to the department. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. J. LEAHY : I merely objected to members of this House kicking down their mates when they got above them.

The HOME SECRETARY : He was sorry to hear that that was a peculiarity of members of the House. The hon. member for Brisbane South asked the intentions of the Government with regard to the Normal State School. He had already indicated that it was the opinion of the Education Department that it was high time that that school should cease drawing children continually from other districts where in all probability they might do just as well.

Mr. J. LEAHY : That school is an anomaly.

The HOME SECRETARY : It was. If Dr. Ham were asked his opinion to-morrow, he believed he would say that it was a most unhealthy place. There was a tremendous amount of traffic passing the school, which absolutely prevented work being done at times. In some respects the Normal School was superior to other schools, but he knew numbers of younger boys in particular who might have been taught just as well at the outside schools.

Mr. LESINA : Could you not prevent that by regulation?

The HOME SECRETARY : He really thought a system of school districts would eventually have to come into force. It was utterly absurd to see one school half empty, while a mile or two away the department was put to the expense of adding to an overcrowded school. That was very prevalent in one or two towns a few years ago, and the Normal State School was a striking example. Possibly by the close of the present financial year the advisability of abolishing the Normal State School might be taken into serious consideration. The idea would be to allow the children attending that school to go to their own district schools. At the present time he thought there were only something like 140 boys who really belonged to the Normal State School district. They came from all over the country.

Hon. E. B. FORREST : Some of the other metropolitan schools are just as badly off in that respect. Take Fortitude Valley. There are constant complaints with regard to the want of accommodation. They are camping all over the place.

The HOME SECRETARY : Did the hon. member mean that the school was overcrowded by children who did not belong to that district?

Hon. E. B. FORREST : I do not know. Probably a good many come from somewhere else.

The HOME SECRETARY : If the children belonged to the district the school should be enlarged. The custom of putting up schools when there was already a sufficiency of school accommodation in the metropolitan area required checking. With regard to the salary of the accountant, the salary of the accountant in the Home Department was £450—£50 more than Mr. Drane received—but the work done by the accountant in the Home Department was possibly about twice the amount done in the Education Department; and, on the whole, he thought the latter was well paid.

Hon. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*) : The question of abolishing the Normal State School raised the question of whether more accommodation would not require to be provided elsewhere.

The HOME SECRETARY : That is quite possible.

HON. E. B. FORREST: In the metropolitan area there was not really sufficient accommodation for the children now. That was so in the case of Fortitude Valley and Leichhardt-street schools. A considerable amount of accommodation would be required if the Normal State School was closed altogether.

Mr. REINHOLD: It ought to be.

HON. E. B. FORREST quite agreed with that. There was insufficient accommodation for the children there. It should never have been left as long as it had been; but its abolition opened up the question of building a larger school somewhere in the district.

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course we shall not close it unless we are sure we can provide accommodation in the other schools.

Mr. FORSYTH: The land is very valuable.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Yes, for other purposes. He hoped that the question of a much larger and better school would be considered. There were plenty of sites not very far away that would be admirable for the purpose. It was no use speaking of transferring the scholars to the surrounding schools because there was no room for them.

Mr. REINHOLD: There is heaps of room.

HON. E. B. FORREST: In the present buildings?

Mr. REINHOLD: Yes.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Was there plenty of room in Fortitude Valley and Leichhardt-street schools?

Mr. REINHOLD: Yes. Fortitude Valley school has 200 less now than it had years ago.

Mr. BOUCHARD: The South Brisbane and West End schools are both overcrowded.

HON. E. B. FORREST: There was not a single school within 5 miles of Brisbane where there was enough room. The playsheds, verandas, and underneath the school buildings were all utilised, and still they were told by an ex-schoolmaster that there was no crush. The hon. member had never seen those schools or he would never make such a statement.

Mr. REINHOLD: There has been a decrease in the attendance of almost every school around Brisbane.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Because they had not room. People would not send their children to places where they were crammed to suffocation.

* Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*): The opinion had been expressed by most hon. members opposite that a great improvement had taken place in consequence of the adoption of the new syllabus, but he thought the results of the old system were just about as good. He did not say there would not be an improvement in a year or two; but the results so far did not warrant the praise that had been bestowed upon the new syllabus. Reference had been made to the number of teachers whose services had been dispensed with on account of their age. In many cases great injustice was done to men who were sound bodily and mentally, and who might have carried on their work for another six or seven years. The Home Secretary told them it was a difficult thing. The hon. gentleman asked whether they were going to decide by a medical examination, by the reports of friends, or by the reports of members of Parliament. It was not very difficult. In some of the Government departments, when a man reached a certain age he was examined by a doctor, and if the doctor certified to his fitness he was retained in the service. That system might be adopted in the Education Department. The hon. member

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for Bowen advocated a harsh and brutal doctrine when he said that the old men should go to give young men a show. A man of sixty-five might be able to render more valuable service to the State on account of his experience, but the hon. member advocated that he should be sent away merely because there was a younger man ready to step into his shoes. That was a new development of socialism. In any department a man should be permitted to do his work so long as he could carry out his duties efficiently. The members of the Government should not willingly do a thing that was cruel in its operation, as this undoubtedly was. All the Home Secretary could do was to justify it by the argument of expediency; but that argument would justify murder or any other crime. There had been a number of cases of harshness and injustice under this regulation, and it was the duty of the Government to very seriously take into consideration whether they should continue this system or whether they should retain men as long as they were able to discharge their duties efficiently. They were also told by the Home Secretary that it was proposed to make some alteration by which all Provisional schools would come in as State schools. There was a large number of Provisional schools which had an attendance which would qualify them to be converted into State schools; and the only reason why they were not made State schools must be that the Government wished to save a few pounds by declining to put those schools into a class they were entitled to, and would not give the children the benefit of having a teacher of a higher class. If all those schools had State school teachers there would be very little need to make the proposed change which the Minister outlined. He did not know that that system would be an improvement. Change and progress were not always synonymous, and, before a man made a change, he should prove that that change was better than the existing system. The school districts scheme that the hon. gentleman spoke of looked well on the face of it, but parents ought to have some say in the matter. In certain schools there were better teachers than in others, and, if a parent was compelled to send his child to the district in which he lived, a serious injustice might be done him. He might even be compelled to leave the district, and, perhaps, his own house, and take a house in another district where there was a better teacher in order that he might give his child a better education. The subject was entitled to more serious consideration than the Minister appeared to have given it. It appeared to be an undue interference with the liberty and rights of parents. It was surprising that such a thing should be suggested by an hon. gentleman who was at one time imbued with democratic ideas. The hon. gentleman must have fallen very much from those high ideals when he proposed such an innovation without serious consideration and without being able to bring forward any strong arguments in its favour. There was one very important matter to which he should

[7.30 p.m.] like to refer, and that was the question of the transfer of teachers. The hon. member for Charters Towers had pointed out very clearly the injustice which teachers in the North suffered through not having an opportunity of getting a transfer to the coast or to the South. The teachers in the Western districts suffered an even greater injustice than the teachers in the North. In the Warrego district, and all over the Western country, both male and female teachers had been applying for years and years to get a transfer, and they could not get it, for the simple reason that all teachers who were in favoured places on the coast moved heaven and earth to retain their positions.

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Whether it was the fault of the law or of the regulations or whether it was that the Minister in charge of the department had not the backbone to do the right thing, the fact remained that those Western teachers had for years continued to suffer this great injustice. It was bad enough for male teachers to be kept in that part of the State, but it was worse for female teachers, and, as far as he could see, they would probably remain there until they were sixty-five years of age, or at any rate as long as they were in the service of the department. He should like the Minister to tell him frankly whether it was the intention of the Government at an early date to do anything to remedy this disability and injustice? If it was admitted that an injustice existed, then it was the bounden duty of the Minister to remedy that injustice.

Mr. REINHOLD: What is the right thing to do?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: The right thing to do was to compel certain teachers who were in the more favoured districts, climatically speaking, near the coast, to take a share of the heat and burden of the day, and give the teachers in the remote districts a turn down here.

Mr. REINHOLD: Suppose they have been twenty years out West already?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: If they had been twenty years out West they should not be sent back. Probably not more than 7 per cent. of the teachers were in the Western districts, and would it not be a fair thing to transfer a small number of teachers who were near the coast to the Western districts, so as to allow those who were now stationed there an opportunity of serving in some more favoured locality? Another matter he desired to refer to was that all over Queensland, but more particularly in the Western districts, the eyesight of children was more or less affected, and there were many cases of affection of the ear, nose, and throat which could be remedied if the children were subjected to periodical medical examinations. It would be possible for a very small expenditure to get a medical examination made two or three times a year of the children in all the State schools in the State. He did not mean a general medical examination, but an examination with regard to the eye, ear, nose, and throat. If such an examination were carried out it would probably have the result of saving many lives—at any rate, it would have the result of enabling a lot of young children to grow up in a better state of health than they were likely to do under present conditions. With respect to itinerant teachers, he was in entire sympathy with this system of teaching, and only regretted that a sufficient number of itinerant teachers had not been appointed. With the Treasury full to the brim last year, and likely to be overflowing next June, why should it not be possible to appoint twenty itinerant teachers to visit the sparsely-populated districts of the State? He did not suppose they were paid more than £150 a year, and if twenty were appointed that would mean an expenditure of £3,000 annually, and from that very small expenditure the State would receive large benefits. A method of this kind was the only method by which the education of children in remote districts was to be directed. The parents might do something; no doubt they did as much as their opportunities permitted, but if an itinerant teacher visited them once or twice a year and directed the studies of the children that would prove of incalculable benefit to the rising generation. The paltry number of three itinerant teachers in a country with 668,000 square miles of territory was ridiculously inadequate, and he should like to see at least twenty appointed. There was another matter that he

wished to mention. It would be in the recollection of some hon. members that some few months ago a very large body representing the schools of arts of the State waited upon the Premier. The hon. gentleman was very sympathetic in his reply, and he (Mr. Leahy) was pleased to notice that there was a larger sum on the Estimates this year for schools of arts; but his complaint was that the Premier had only partly kept the promise which he made on that occasion. He (Mr. Leahy) pointed out on that occasion that the Western schools of arts ought to be placed on a better footing than the schools of arts in places near the coast. The Premier admitted that that was a reasonable contention, and said they would be placed on a better footing. He noticed by the Estimates that increased subsidies were given only to reading rooms in connection with shearing-sheds and sugar-mills.

The PREMIER: You are quite incorrect.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: The footnote was "Aid not to exceed 10s. for every £1 subscribed, except to reading rooms, etc., in connection with shearing-sheds and sugar-mills."

The PREMIER: What did they get last year?

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: He had admitted that the Premier had partly kept his promise, but his complaint was that the Western schools of arts were not placed in a better position as compared with schools of arts on the coast.

The PREMIER: Don't you see what that footnote means? The larger schools of arts cannot get more than 10s.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: It might mean something of that kind. A school of arts at Charleville might get 10s. in the £1, but it might not get anything more. All schools of arts, except in the cities, got 10s. the same as in the West. While he was in sympathy with the subsidising of shearing-sheds to the extent of £1 for £1, he believed that the hon. gentleman knew that there was not a great number of cases in which reading-rooms were established in connection with shearing-sheds, and the hon. gentleman would, therefore, get a little popularity which would cost nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to point out to the hon. member that it would be better if he reserved his remarks on this subject till we come to the vote for schools of art and technical education.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: That was his intention at the outset, and he would have finished his remarks on this subject long before if it had not been for the disorderly interjections of the Premier. With reference to the report of the department something was said in one paragraph with regard to children in the dairying districts—something with which the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba did not agree. When authorities on education differed—and he supposed he must consider the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba an authority—it was very hard for an ordinary layman to know what he should do. But, notwithstanding the remarks of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, he thought there was a considerable amount of truth in the paragraph referred to. He believed that the parents of children in dairying districts were just as anxious that their children should be educated as the parents of children in other districts; but owing to the nature of their occupation, which necessitated working early and late, and owing to legislation which had been passed by the present Government, farmers were to a large extent compelled to employ their children in connection with dairying, and it was due to this fact that the school attendances

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in those districts were not as large as they ought to be. If they could do anything within reasonable limits to obviate this condition of things they would be doing a good thing for the children and a good thing for the State. With regard to the education of children in agricultural subjects, he did not know that very much was done in that direction. At any rate, a great deal more might be done. In the Irish national schools the great bulk of the pupils, except in the elementary classes, were taught the composition of soils, the rotation of crops, and something in regard to live stock, and all this knowledge came in very useful in after life. If education on these lines were given to the children in our schools—and it probably would not take more than thirty minutes a day—they would do more effective work than was being done at the present time. He trusted that the Minister would seriously consider this matter. On page 11 the report states—

Forty-three applications for new Provisional schools were received, and twenty-five of these were approved; some of the applications were under consideration, and others had been deferred or refused for various reasons.

Why was it those applications were not approved? The people of the district, who ought to be the best judges, had subscribed the necessary one-fifth contribution, and made a formal application to the department for the establishment of another school, and the applications had been rejected. It was owing to the desire of the Treasurer to keep down all expenses that were paid out of revenue that the education of the country districts was being starved at the present time, and had been starved for the last year or two. There was no other reason why those applications should be rejected.

Mr. TOLMIE: Perhaps there was sufficient accommodation.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: If the people of any particular district subscribed the one-fifth contribution, that was the very strongest argument that could be given in favour of the establishment of a school in the district. No explanation had been given.

Mr. TOLMIE: Perhaps the schools there are too thick already.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: His complaint was that there were certain places where the schools were too thin. The only possible explanation was that the people who contributed the money were fools and they did not know their business—that the Education Department knew it better. The Committee ought to be told why it was those applications were rejected. He was not at all sure they were going in the right direction in regard to our education system. The present system gave more of a mental education, and they ought to give the children some knowledge which would assist them in making their living in the battle of life.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is socialism.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Not at all. Socialism was not fitting the children for the battle of life—it was unfitting them. If the dreams of the socialists were carried out there would be no battle of life; but the whole thing was utterly impracticable. The crying need in this country at the present time was the development of our primary industries. There was any amount of employment for a man who was a mechanic or farm labourer, but all the towns in Australia were full of clerks who could not get billets. That was what our educational system was doing. No one admitted more readily than he did the value of education, but it did not follow that the education they were giving was of the right kind. He thought they should have more technical

education which would fit a man for the battle of life. It seemed to him that the aim of most young people in Australia was to avoid hard work.

The TREASURER: It is the same all over the world.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: Let the Treasurer speak for himself. He (Mr. Leahy) had never been afraid of hard work. The Government were assisting that aim in giving an education which was comparatively of little benefit, as it did not help the young people to get billets, and it was not for the good of the country. A larger amount of encouragement should be given to technical education, which would enable the boys and girls in this country to make a living.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*): Reference had been made to the intention of the Government to do away with the Normal State School, and the hon. member for North Brisbane referred to the crowded state of several of the schools in the metropolitan area. That statement had been challenged so far as Fortitude Valley school was concerned; but he could bear out the statement of the hon. member for North Brisbane that two of the schools in Fortitude Valley and one in New Farm were overcrowded. The New Farm school had been overcrowded since its erection. A short period after the erection of the school it had to be considerably extended in order to accommodate the children. He believed if the pupils belonging to the different districts attended the State schools in their districts, the schools would not be nearly large enough to accommodate them. For instance, scholars from almost every district around Brisbane attended the Normal State School; in fact, scholars as far as Ipswich came down there every day. That sort of thing was growing, and time and again they saw that schools that were erected in the metropolitan area had to be considerably increased in accommodation immediately afterwards. The only possible solution for that business—and he expected some announcement from the Minister—was the erection of superior or higher schools. He understood that some years ago the idea of the erection of higher schools was considered by the department, and that scholars who attained to the sixth class would be drafted to those schools. They should have a central school in Brisbane, one on the south side, and one in one of the other districts—higher schools somewhat on the same lines as had been established and worked for very many years in New South Wales. If something like that were done, it would relieve a large number of the schools and it would take away the necessity which now existed for separate teachers having to teach the higher classes. If the sixth class were drafted into the higher, or superior, schools, it would relieve the metropolitan schools, and it would add to the efficiency of those schools, because he understood at present that separate teachers had to teach the higher classes in those schools. He would also like to see something done in the matter of swimming as far as the State schools were concerned. In Brisbane, he was glad to say, an effort had been made to have some guarantee that the water supplied to the public baths would be properly purified, and he would very much like to see the Education Department take up the matter and teach the boys and girls swimming. That was most essential, as they saw every day cases where children's lives might have been saved if this matter had been introduced. The matter deserved the serious consideration of the department. He believed in some cases the head teachers of their own accord, in order to impart that knowledge to their pupils, devoted a lot of their time to teaching swimming. He thought that the

Mr. McDonnell.]

municipalities and divisional boards who controlled the baths would give every opportunity to the department to use those baths at certain hours on certain days. He was certain if that particular matter were taken up by the department where facilities were accorded them, such as they had in Brisbane, it would be of very great benefit to the children—both boys and girls. He hoped the Minister would consider the matter, and see if it was possible for the department to lend their aid and take the matter up. He noticed on the Estimates that Mr. Story had been appointed Under Secretary for the department. Some time ago he had had occasion to criticise the administration of the department, and he was very glad to be in a position to say, from his own knowledge, and from the knowledge he had of those working in the department, that there was a very marked improvement in the administration of the department under Mr. Story. It was very noticeable that since that gentleman got the position of Under Secretary of Public Instruction the best feeling existed, and teachers now were treated more as colleagues than as mere machines. He hoped that under Mr. Story's enlightened and progressive guidance the department would make progress, and that the humane lines on which it was now worked would continue.

Hon. R. PHILP: Were they ever inhumane?

Mr. McDONNELL: They were better than they had been, and he would not say more than that. When they had any occasion [8 p.m.] to say these things, they should say them on the floor of the House, and it was well known to-day there was a marked change for the better in the administration of the department.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is only your opinion.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. member was quite wrong. Perhaps the hon. gentleman did not like it. It was only fair when members had anything to say in praise of their public officials that they should take the opportunity of saying it on the floor of the House.

Mr. COWAP (*Fitzroy*) agreed with what had been said about Mr. Story, and had always found him ready and willing to assist him in connection with any matter relating to the Education Department. A number of the school buildings in his district had been enlarged, and there had also been one or two new schools built. The hon. member for Warrego had a loud wail to make about the female teacher in his district, and he said he was sorry for the female teacher who had been sent out there. It was not so a year or two ago. In 1903 when they were discussing the Education Estimates, the present Home Secretary said something about the female teachers who went out West and never came back again, and it was supposed that they got married. Well, if these teachers went out there and got married it was surely a good thing. The hon. member for Warrego, speaking in reply to the Home Secretary on that occasion, said—

However, if the hon. member's statement was correct, he could only say he was pleased to hear it, and it might be desirable, considering how stationary the population was, to send as many females there as possible and start a sort of matrimonial subdepartment in connection with the Education Department, which might do a good deal of good.

He thought that after a teacher had put in two or three years in a Western district or North-western district they should be given a change down to the coast, or even to Brisbane, and give some of the Brisbane teachers a chance to go out

[*Mr. McDonnell.*

into the Western districts for a while. (Hear, hear!) If that system were adopted it would give those teachers a change from Western conditions and there would not be so much to complain about it. The hon. member for Bowen spoke about the unsuitability of some of the school buildings, and as he (Mr. Cowap) had been brought up in the building trade, he had noticed that some of the school buildings were very unsuitable. He had noticed cases where small buildings were erected for the same price as it would cost to put up a larger building. The bareer a school building was without any elaboration at all, the better it would be in this climate. It would be better to have the buildings bigger and plainer and have the walls so erected so that portion of them could be removed for the purposes of ventilation. Playsheds were also very necessary. If there were more playsheds in the Brisbane schools it would be better for the scholars, as they could be taught just as efficiently there as if they were inside the building. It would be better to have playsheds where the schools were overcrowded, and the children could be taught their lessons in the playsheds. With regard to the classification of Provisional schools, he knew a number of teachers who were waiting to be classified and appointed to State schools. At the present time there seemed no possible chance of their being able to do so. He was pleased, however, to hear the Minister say that the department was taking that matter into consideration. Many teachers of Provisional schools had put in hours of study, and were all ready to be classified for State schools. He hoped something would be done for the better ventilation of schools, as it would be better for the children.

Mr. J. LEAHY: With regard to the vexed question of the transfer of teachers, most members who lived in the remote districts must have had this matter brought before them from time to time. It was a long-standing grievance, not only with this Government but with all Governments as long as he could remember, and it had never been successfully dealt with yet. He had given this matter considerable attention, not to teachers alone but to other persons in the public service similarly situated to teachers, and it appeared to him that it was not altogether impossible to devise a scheme by which justice would be done to those different classes of public servants. It was the same as when a working man went to a district where he could earn a higher wage under greater difficulties than what he had been accustomed to—he was compensated by the extra emolument he received. If there was not a sufficient difference existing between the salary of the teacher in the bush and the same class of teacher down here, then let them deduct something from one and put it on to the other, and that would equalise matters. A man—or a woman either—was prepared to put up with a certain amount of discomfort for a certain amount of pay. It was for that reason that a man went hunting for gold, because he got a chance of certain emoluments. It was the same with teachers. They were prepared to put up with all the flies and diseases in the West for a certain amount of additional pay. Let the department take the money from one class who wished to remain here and put it on those who went out West, and there would be no difficulty whatever. Or the Government could fix a scale and make the difference between the teachers in the town and the ones out West, and in that way the thing could be adjusted. The percentage of teachers in the bush was very small compared with those in the settled districts, and a very small alteration would compensate. They would undertake the hardships for increased emoluments.

Mr. KERR: So would the young men.

Mr. J. LEAHY: The hon. member interjected that the young men would do the same. These people had already to put up with a lot of hardship. The teachers were usually the daughters of people who had put up with hardship all their lives. His experience was that when a lady teacher went into a district she got the best accommodation that the district could provide. He knew that frequently the accommodation was not good. He admitted that at once; yet many of these people had women and daughters who had been just as well brought up as the single women teachers. They had to put up with these conditions in these districts. They could not improve the accommodation, but they could compensate the teachers who went there. On the other hand, his experience had been that many single women who went to these wild districts had made very good marriages. It was the best thing they could have done to go out there. They did not know what they were going to, but they met a superior class of men, including some with fortunes; these men married these teachers, and some of them made first-class matches. Would anybody say that that had been an injury to these girls, who thought when they went away from home they were going to be banished to some savage country. There were many mining districts which had a charm of their own, and the teachers who were sent there were compensated by the sterling qualities of the people they met there. He did not think that these teachers would have very much to complain about if everything was thoroughly looked into. It was said that there was always a vacancy at Charters Towers and Croydon because the teachers were always getting married. He had some knowledge of the bush districts, and he did not think they were as badly treated as they had been told. Settlers in the bush might not have the fine qualities they expected in the highest class of society; but he ventured to say that, taking them all round, they were a very excellent class, and as good as the average run of people in the cities. He did not think there was any particular reason for complaint. Some teachers might object on the ground of health or eyesight; but they might get the persons best qualified to live in a particular district, and they might perhaps compensate teachers for living in the remote parts of the State by giving them increased emoluments.

Mr. BARTON (*Carnarvon*) was very pleased to see the system was working fairly well, though there was ample room still for improvement. He was glad to notice that there was to be an improvement in regard to the design of school buildings. He suggested that schools should be built at least 6 feet from the ground for the purpose of providing shade for the children and better ventilation. Some hon. members on the other side made mention of what education was doing. It was doing, perhaps, more than some of them liked. It created a democratic feeling. People commenced to think for themselves when they were educated; and, when people thought for themselves they often capsize some people. (Laughter.) There was a class of people who had enjoyed power for a good while, and, as education advanced, they found that people wanted to alter the existing state of affairs, and enable another class of people to take possession. He was pleased education was being pushed forward in all directions, as they could not have too much of it. When they commenced to think for themselves they formed radical ideas; and the quicker they had them the better. He was sorry for the other party he referred to, but still they had to put up with it. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. KERR (*Barcoo*) was very pleased to listen to the speech of the hon. member for Bulloo with reference to the female teachers who had been sent to the remote parts of the State. He considered the Director of Education and the Under Secretary were well qualified for the positions they held, and he quite approved of the increases that were given them. He was also pleased to see that the clerks in the Head Office were getting increases. For several years he had drawn attention to a standing grievance that the teachers in the Northern, Western, and South-western portions of the State laboured under; and he wished again to draw the attention of the Minister and of the officers of the department to it. Many of those teachers had risen from the position of pupil-teachers to that of assistant under very hard conditions. They had not had the opportunities of attending technical classes that young teachers had in large centres. They had done good service in the department; but, when they asked for a transfer to the coast or to a large centre of population where they might qualify themselves for a higher class by attending technical classes, they could not get transfers, the reason being that teachers in and around Brisbane declined to leave the city. Many of those teachers had never been outside Brisbane. That was very unfair to the country teachers. He knew the Home Secretary sympathised with them. The hon. gentleman had met many of them in his travels through the State; and he trusted the Director of Education and the Under Secretary would take into consideration the disabilities country teachers laboured under in that respect. They had an ambition as well as the assistant teachers in Brisbane to rise in the service, because they knew that, unless they qualified for a higher class, they were going to remain "hewers of wood and drawers of water" all their lives in the back blocks.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): Every member who represented a Western constituency would agree most heartily with the sentiments expressed by the leader of the Labour party, the hon. member for Bulloo, and the hon. member for Warrego. In speaking to school teachers in his own district he had heard the same old tale time out of mind with respect to the disadvantages under which they laboured; and, as they were assured by the last speaker that the Minister in charge of the Estimates was sympathetic, there was every hope that some improvement might be made. But there was no good in a Minister being sympathetic unless he acted; and here was an excellent opportunity to act. The suggestion of the hon. member for Bulloo was a very practical one. Officers in other departments received an allowance for increased cost of living in remote places.

Mr. KERR: But that does not make up for the disadvantages.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Increase the allowance until it does.

Mr. LESINA: That was why he maintained the suggestion of the hon. member for Bulloo was a practical and common-sense one, and one which would satisfy the teachers throughout Queensland. If a teacher was prepared to spend the best years of his life in some out-back place, he should have some compensation, and the only way to make that compensation was to pay an increased wage. There was a very poor demand among teachers for schools in outside districts. In a few cases teachers might be anxious to get a school in a district where their health was likely to be benefited; but teachers enjoying ordinary health were not willing to exchange with teachers outside. A distinct injustice was thus done to the latter class; and that injustice should be compensated for in the pounds, shillings, and

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pence fashion suggested by the hon. member for Bulloo. There were one or two questions he would like to ask the Minister. The department was more or less administered under an Act of Parliament, and governed by regulation. In other departments initiative was required at times, while in the Education Department they worked along given lines. While not suggesting that the Minister interfered to any extent, he was sure the department would give even more general satisfaction than it was now giving if the Minister would leave it alone. Excepting for the first two or three months after he became a member, he had never had any trouble with the department. That was a thing to be thankful for, because the department was one of the highest and best examples of modern State socialism, and that was why he liked to see it made a success and its powers increased. There was one matter in which the department might make a very long and practical stride. In

New South Wales the Government [8.30 p.m.] had recently appointed general inspectors, whose duty it was to visit the schools and examine the teeth of the children. It was a notorious fact that in Queensland the teeth of children, whether it was due to the water or not he could not say, decayed more rapidly than the teeth of children down south, and one way in which the Education Department could do excellent work was in appointing honorary dentists to examine the teeth of the children at stated times. A Right Rev. Lord Bishop in England had pointed out, in an article published in a well-known review, that it was necessary to go further than that, and introduce a system of medical inspection in connection with their schools—that it was wiser to prevent disease than to cure it. If we had a periodical medical examination in the schools of Queensland it was quite possible that many complaints which affected certain districts at times would be prevented. He should particularly like to see some steps taken to preserve the children's eyesight, especially in the Western parts of the country. Sometimes a Western school was closed because of an epidemic of blight among the scholars. It was a most pitiable thing to go into those schools, as he had done in his own district, and find that twenty or thirty children were away with sore eyes or sandy blight, and that among those who were present there were ten or twenty more who ought to be at home. In this matter, as well as in the cultivation of the mind, the State should spend money wisely and profitably. The Government should provide for the medical examination of children, and in the Western country should also provide ointment or eyewashes for pupils suffering from blight. Some children had their eyesight permanently impaired, owing to the fact that when they had recovered from the blight they had to sit over small print in a bad light in carrying on their studies. The number of persons, young and old, who had to resort to spectacles was increasing, and we were fast becoming a spectacled community. He was sure that no member of the Committee would grudge expenditure in the directions which he had indicated. If the advice tendered by the Right Rev. Lord Bishop with regard to the periodical medical inspection of schools was good for the old country, surely it was good advice for Queensland. He should like to ask the Home Secretary whether it was intended to retire Mr. Ewart from his position as Director of Education when he reached the age limit, or whether it was intended to make any further appointment? He wanted to enter his protest against the system which removed from the service capable men merely because they had reached the age of sixty-five years. There were

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men who were doing excellent service to the country in this Legislature who had reached the age of eighty years, and he did not think it was a wise thing to insist that public servants should retire from their position merely because they had attained a certain age. It was making old age a crime. In Chatham's time it was a crime to be a young man. If Chatham came back to mother earth he would discover that nowadays it was a crime to be an old man, and a particularly heinous offence to be an old woman. It was a shame to say that men in various departments of the public service should be turned adrift when they reached a certain age. It had been urged that young men should get a chance, that not the young men were waiting for the positions now occupied by old men. Out West they called that waiting for a death. A man camped over at a shearing hut waiting till another man got the "sack" so that he might fill his shoes, and that was called "waiting for a death." In the case of the public service it was a case of young men waiting for the positions of old men, whose experience they could not possibly possess. There ought to be no hard-and-fast rule in this matter; there should be some method of dealing with exceptions. He hoped that this matter would receive the consideration of the Government.

Mr. WOODS (*Woothakata*) agreed with the suggestion made by the hon. member for Bulloo in connection with the transfer of teachers from Northern and Western portions of Queensland to positions in the South. There were men and women who had been in the Northern and Western portions of the State for such a long period that their health had broken down, and at the present time, before they could get a transfer they had to be prepared to accept a lower class school, and thus offer an inducement to a teacher in the Southern part of the State to go to Northern or Central Queensland. This meant that they were practically foisting upon the people of Northern and Western Queensland men of a lower classification than were taken away from those parts of the State. This kind of thing had been done in other departments of the service besides the Education Department. It had existed to a serious extent in a department which had been controlled by the hon. member for Bulloo, and when the hon. member had an opportunity of formulating a scheme to obviate that condition of things, instead of trying to alleviate the grievance which existed among men in Northern and Western Queensland he increased those evils month after month and year after year. The hon. member reduced men to lower grades of the service, and squeezed them as a butter-factory man squeezed the water out of butter. He made these remarks because he objected to the hon. member trying to lead the House and the country to believe that he had an enormous amount of humane feeling for the school teachers of this State. The hon. member always had his eye on a fat billet, and the only thing that troubled the hon. gentleman now was that he was sitting on the wrong side of the House and was not drawing his £1,000 a year.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I trust the hon. member will confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. WOODS said he hoped the Home Secretary would take into consideration the unfairness of asking men who were broken down in health through long residence in the Northern and Western portions of Queensland to accept a lower class school in order to obtain a transfer for the benefit of their health. He noticed that there were several increases on this vote. He was glad to see that the two officers who were

then sitting in the lobby had received increases. He could not understand why the Under Secretary of this department, who had the control of such an enormous amount of money and such a large number of schools, should receive £150 per annum less than any Under Secretary in any other department of the State. He thought the Under Secretary for Education was quite as much entitled to £500 or £600 a year as any other Under Secretary in the service, and he hoped that the Minister would see his way to consider the position of Mr. Story. He did not suppose he had received any better treatment from Mr. Story than any other member of the Committee. He was quite certain that no member of the House ever went to the Education Office for information in the interests of the district he represented who did not receive the utmost courtesy from that officer.

The HOME SECRETARY thought the hon. member was hardly correct in his statement. Take Charters Towers as an instance—he could take Croydon, Charleville, or a number of other Northern or Western towns—the average ability of teachers in those schools was quite equal to the quality of the teachers in most of the coast towns. It had been said that the city of Brisbane monopolised the pick of the teachers. As a matter of fact, he could mention a number of places where the teaching ability was quite equal to what it was in and around the city of Brisbane. The hon. member for Clermont asked was it the intention of the Government to retire certain persons in the department on their attaining the age of seventy years. He might state that the Government did not intend to make any exceptions. The question of transfers of teachers had also been raised, and it was a matter of very considerable expense. They must all admit that there was a great deal of justice in the assertion that teachers ought to take a turn in the Western districts. He (Mr. Airey) had served in the Centre, in the North, and in the West. The rule of the department was that after female teachers had served in the West or in the North for a period of two years, they were brought back to the coast or to the Southern or South-western district, from which they were originally sent. That rule was pretty well adhered to.

Mr. PAULL: I know one teacher who has served twenty years in the North.

The HOME SECRETARY: There might be a few exceptions, but in the vast majority of cases consideration was given to those matters. With regard to the question of the male teachers, they were required to remain away longer, but he could mention a very considerable number of teachers in the coastal towns who had served in the Centre, South-west, or North of Queensland. The hon. member for Bulloo suggested that they should offer increased emoluments as an inducement for teachers to go out West. He (Mr. Airey) admitted that there was something in that, but it would require a very considerable inducement to induce a teacher to change from Brisbane or Maryborough or Rockhampton to some far Western town. He thought the better plan would be to make the teacher's chance of promotion depend on his willingness to go into the outside districts. (Hear, hear!) Possibly a combination of the suggestion of the hon. member for Bulloo and the one he made would meet the difficulty. The hon. member for Warrego wished to know why a number of Provisional schools had not been converted into State schools. It was quite true that a number of Provisional schools had made application to be converted into State schools, but a number of circumstances had to be considered. They might be situated in a very uncertain district, or in a mining town,

where the population might not be settled, and it would be inadvisable to convert such a Provisional school into a State school. The Under Secretary stated that in every case where application was made an inspector was sent to investigate, and in no single case was a refusal given if the inspector reported favourably on it.

Mr. LESINA: He had pointed out that in New South Wales they had a medical inspector who visited the schools. He thought a periodical medical inspection of children in all schools should be made on the principle that it was better to preserve the health of the young than to try to restore it. Would the department do anything in the matter, especially with regard to eye diseases?

The HOME SECRETARY: It had been suggested already that a periodical examination of the eyes of the children should be made in order to prevent the spread of the eye disease. He did not think the department would be able to go that far just yet. But during the course of last year a number of recommendations from the Central Board of Health in regard to the method of treating children who were affected, or in danger of being affected, were sent to the State schools. Nearly everybody in the Western districts got the eye trouble sooner or later; but it appeared to him that with cleanliness and plenty of water a good deal of the disease could be done away with. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley brought up the question of swimming. There was no doubt it would be a very fine thing if they could afford to teach the children in the schools swimming. When he was a boy, they had a river running alongside the school, and every day, at the close of the school, they jumped in, and there was no difficulty about that; but if they had no river or creek it became a very difficult matter. He knew at the Junction Park State School the boys got regular lessons in swimming, and he should like to see the day when they could afford to send all the boys in the State schools—in the dinner-hour or in the evening—to some public bath to enjoy themselves. It was not so much a matter of learning to swim as in the interests of cleanliness.

* Mr. REINHOLD: The matter of transfers was a very great trouble to the department. It was a burning question with the teachers generally, but as far as the assistant teachers were concerned there was no very great difficulty in the way of solving it satisfactorily. But when they came to head teachers it was a different matter altogether. It was stated that when a teacher wanted to come from the North to Brisbane, or some place on the coast, he had to take a school of an inferior classification. The Minister had already pointed out that that was not necessarily so, but it seemed to him unfair that those teachers who had done their turn out West should be asked to go out again and take a smaller school away from the coast, with less emoluments. The great objection that most of the teachers had to those changes was that it sometimes cost them a considerable sum of money to get there, and the department did not treat them all alike. On some occasions it cost them nothing—they got all their expenses paid, while other teachers had to pay out of their own pockets £40 or £50.

The HOME SECRETARY: That comes in the State schools vote. We can discuss that later on.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY: The Minister had touched very lightly on the point he had raised as regards the medical treatment of school children, and said it was a matter of expense. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that it was the eyes only

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[9 p.m.]

that needed inspection ; but it was also necessary in the case of the ears and nose. What would it cost for an inspection of that kind two or three times a year? He ventured to say that in the Western and North-western districts the expense would not be £1,000 per annum. There was not the same necessity for an inspection of that kind near the coast, because in most instances the parents of the children had an opportunity of getting the inspection desired. All these things could be remedied in the majority of instances by the expenditure of £1,000. Grammar was a very good thing ; but it was not everything. It was far better to have a healthy community ; but it looked as if they could not afford a few paltry thousands to enable them to bring up their children as a healthy race.

Question put and passed.

STATE SCHOOLS—INSPECTION.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £6,670 be granted for "Inspection." The salaries were the same as last year, but there was an increase of £100 in contingencies. There was a vacancy in the position of senior inspector, Mr. Platt, the senior inspector having died on the 21st of November, 1906. That gentleman's place had not been filled. The schools which Mr. Platt would have visited were allotted amongst the other inspectors for this year, and the adjustments which would be made consequent on Mr. Platt's death would be made as from the 1st of January, 1907. There was no immediate intention of filling Mr. Platt's position. The increase of £100 in contingencies was brought about because there were more schools established and settlement was extending.

HON. R. PHILP: Did he understand the Minister to say that there was no intention of replacing Mr. Platt.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not at present. The rearrangement will be made at the beginning of next year.

HON. R. PHILP: Did the Government intend to appoint another inspector, or would they run the inspection one man short.

The HOME SECRETARY: Another appointment would be made.

Mr. REINHOLD asked if the appointment of another inspector was not to be made until the beginning of next year, when would the position of senior inspector be filled?

The HOME SECRETARY: It was the intention of the Department of Public Instruction to appoint another inspector, but whether the rank of senior inspector would be recognised in future, he was not prepared to say. He rather thought the Minister would not be inclined towards it.

Mr. LESINA: If it was a good principle to lay down the question of seniority in connection with the *Hansard* staff, about which they had a discussion the other night, why not do it in this case? Now it was proposed to have a dozen inspectors, and they were all on the same footing, shoulder to shoulder in the ranks. There must be a senior man, as they were not all appointed at once.

The HOME SECRETARY: There certainly must be a senior ; you cannot avoid it.

Mr. LESINA: If there was no extra emolument, there was no advantage in seniority at all.

Question put and passed.

[*Mr. P. J. Leahy.*

STATE SCHOOLS—SCHOOLS (SUBDIVISION).

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £300,655 be granted for "Schools (Subdivision)." Hon. members would be glad to notice that the head teachers again received emoluments corresponding with their classification. The principal increases were: Increases to head teachers through the reclassification of the State schools, £570 ; and grade promotions from the 1st of July, 1906, including deferred promotions without arrears to assistant teachers, £12,000 ; and the promotion of pupil-teachers of Class IV. to Class III., from the 1st of January, £2,003. That made a total increase of £14,573. The amount for head teachers of State schools was £97,670. There was an increase of £570 to head teachers, made up of £280 increase on account of the annual classification, and £790 increase on account of the opening of four new State schools. That made a total of £1,070. But, owing to the closing of five State schools, there was a decrease of £500, which made a net increase as stated of £570. The five schools closed were Pine Hill, Calliope River, Mont-albion, Yaamba, and Brisbane Central Infants. The first four were closed on account of small attendance. The last was amalgamated with the Brisbane Central Girls' State School. The four new schools which were opened were—Capalaba, Glenore Grove, Proserpine, and Leichhardt Ward. The amount for assistant teachers was £109,426—an increase of £15,402. There was an increase of 153 male and 120 female classified teachers. For two years the classification of pupil-teachers, who had passed the classified examination and completed their apprenticeship, was deferred for financial reasons, and they were provided for in the Estimates as "unclassified" teachers. In the Estimates for 1905-6 provision was made for their classification, and they were classified accordingly as from the 1st of July, 1905. Their salaries appeared in the current Estimates under their respective classifications. The grade promotions of teachers had been deferred for four years. Provision was made in these Estimates for a restoration of grade promotions. Some of the teachers were due for promotion in two grades, and provision had been made to enable them to be raised two grades. The increased pay would date from 1st July, 1906, but no provision had been made for the payment of arrears. There was provision for the grade promotion of 187 male and 305 female assistant teachers, and of these sixty-four males and ninety females were due for double promotions. The single promotion represented an increase of £20 per annum to males, £18 to females ; and the double promotion £40 to males and £36 to females. The total amount provided for grade promotions was £12,000. Provision was only made for four unclassified male teachers and eleven unclassified female teachers, as against 115 males and 121 females in 1905-6. The large decrease was due to the fact that males and females who had passed for classification, but whose promotion had been deferred, had now been classified. The promotion of pupil-teachers amounted to £2,420. This was a decrease of £483, due to the fact that there were eighty-seven less pupil-teachers this year than last, but there was, of course, a consequent increase in the number of classified teachers.

HON. R. PHILP: He thought they had discussed this vote already, notwithstanding the Chairman's ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Order ! I hope the hon. gentleman is not making any reflection on my action.

Mr. J. LEAHY: He is not reflecting on the Chairman ; he is pointing out what is a fact.

HON. R. PHILP: So far as he could see, this vote had already been discussed. There had been a lot of talk about the Western or Northern teachers being brought to the coast. He thought that something of that kind should be done. He knew some men who had been in the North for twenty-five years.

The HOME SECRETARY: Some of them will not leave it.

HON. R. PHILP: There were four Class I. schools in the State—two at Charters Towers and two at Brisbane; and they should give the Northern men a chance to come down here. There was a vacancy in the Normal State School, and they could fill that with a Northern teacher.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is no intention of filling that vacancy.

HON. R. PHILP: He knew one man who had been in Townsville for twenty years, and he wanted a shift on account of his family. Now the department had a chance to bring him to Brisbane, they should do so. He did all he could to allow Northern men and Western men to come to the coast when he was in power. If the Government intended to keep the Normal State School, they must have someone in charge of it.

The HOME SECRETARY: We intend to break it up.

HON. R. PHILP: They could not do it in a day nor in a year. It would take some time to do it, and they should get some capable man from the North or the West. Instead of that, they would find some man appointed who had never left Brisbane. That would be a most unfair thing to do. He was very pleased to see that the vote for head teachers was increased; but the amount of £570 among 449 teachers would not go very far. It was equal to about £1 5s. per head. Hon. members on both sides would be pleased to see the increase of £15,000 in the vote for assistant teachers. It was well deserved. Those teachers attained their classification by examination, merit, and long service; but classification without remuneration was not much use. He again urged upon the Government that when vacancies occurred in the South some of the Northern teachers should be given an opportunity of coming here. Some teachers had suffered a reduction in classification in order to get down for the sake of their health or the health of their families.

Mr. REINHOLD: They generally do it, and are glad to do it.

HON. R. PHILP: There were men in the North who were receiving less money than men who were their juniors, who were kept in the South. He remembered one case where a man appealed to him about being shifted. He told him he was the sole support of his mother, and he did not know how many children. On inquiry, he found that this teacher had a brother, a sister, and a cousin in the service, and not one of them was more than 25 miles from home. He knew also of a young lady who had a father in a good school here; and he had defied every Minister until Mr. Dalrymple came into office. He sent her away, and Mr. Dalrymple was as humane as the present Minister—perhaps more so. The present Minister was a personal acquaintance of a teacher at Killarney, and he gave that teacher a good school here.

Mr. REINHOLD: He is a good teacher, and has been a long time in the service.

HON. R. PHILP: There were many other good teachers, and perhaps they had been longer in the service; but this teacher was brought down here because of his acquaintance with the

Minister. If the Minister had an opportunity of giving some men in the North promotion he hoped he would do it.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Burke*) hoped the Minister would transfer some of the Northern men. He remembered the late Mr. Chataway telling a very good tale at one time in connection with a lady teacher. He said that an application came in for the transfer of this young lady from the Western part of Queensland. Being in the locality one day, he called at the school and found it closed. He roiled up the next day and asked the teacher where she had been. She said: "I rode 20 miles to a dance." Mr. Chataway then said: "I saw an application from you in the department for a transfer on the ground of ill-health." She said: "It was my chap who got me to write that application. He lives there, and wants to get me a little closer to him." There would be a lot of that going on. Still there were some very hard cases in the West, and more especially in the North. Some years ago a young woman, who had been stationed at Croydon for five or six years, asked for a transfer to the South, and she was told she could get down by paying her own expenses. That was scarcely fair after she had been there for a number of years. There were plenty of teachers who had never left Brisbane. They got close to the Minister's ear, and the man who was a long way from the Minister's ear had no opportunity of getting a transfer. This state of affairs was not peculiar to the Education Department. It existed in the Police Department and other departments, the rule being that the farther away a man was the smaller his chance of promotion or transfer. If the Minister carried out his promise of making promotion depend on the time teachers had served outside, or if that factor was taken into consideration, it would be a good thing for the teachers.

Mr. PAGET (*Mackay*): Last year the expenditure for school requisites was £1,400 13s. 4d. This year £2,750 was asked. Were there to be more school requisites supplied?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. BOWMAN: There were £2,000 on the Estimates last year.

Mr. PAGET: He had not the slightest objection to the department asking for the amount, but the Committee had every right to know why double the amount spent last year was asked for. The amount spent last year on instruction in cookery was £51 15s., and they were asked to vote £80 this year. In what way was this money spent, and could such a sum be of any very great service among such an enormous number of schools? Then there was a new vote of £250 for "Instruction in Agriculture." There were 1,044 schools in the State, so that the vote represented 5s. per school. Perhaps the Minister would give the Committee some information as to how the money was to be spent. A great number of schools, especially in the country districts, were taking a very great interest in the subject of agriculture education; but this vote was too miserable for the teachers to be able to do any good. The money would not buy one hoe and one spade for each school; and he did not see how the children could receive very much instruction in the greatest industry in the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: The vote of £250 for "Instruction in Agriculture" was an entirely new item. The department was trying to give something in the nature of a practical education in certain country districts. The vote was intended to provide seed for experimental purposes, and to assist in the purchase of simple agricultural and farming implements. It would

not go very far, but it was not the intention to conduct agricultural experiments in every school in the State. It was only intended for certain districts. The item of £80 for "Instruction in Cookery" was the same as the amount voted last year. Classes for instruction in cookery had been in vogue in the Normal State School for four or five years, and they now existed in a few of the principal schools of the State. He understood that in the higher classes certain girls recommended by the head teacher received the benefit of this instruction. He supposed, if they did the right thing, instead of spending £80, they would be spending £8,000 or £9,000, very much to the benefit of the community.

Mr. PAGET: And to the detriment of the doctors.

The HOME SECRETARY: With reference to the increase in the vote for school requisites, for the last two or three years that vote had not been what it should be. There was need for an increase, and this year it was raised to £2,750. A great deal of the material had been pretty well worn out and had to be replaced, and in many schools the stocks were low.

Mr. McDONNELL: Hon. members on the other side had made a pretty strong plea on behalf of the Northern teachers. That was quite natural from their point of view; but what surprised him was that hon. members, who had from time to time told them that there was no finer climate in the world than that of Northern Queensland, should now talk of the great difficulties and disabilities teachers laboured under on account of that climate.

Mr. FORSYTH: I have never heard anybody say that the climate was one of the finest in the world.

Mr. McDONNELL thought he had heard the hon. member say so, for one. It was only on occasions like the present that the climate of North Queensland was abused, when hon. members were advocating the transfer of teachers from the North. He did not object to that at all, as it was only right that teachers in the North should have a show of coming South, where the climate was milder, at all events; but hon. members were not altogether consistent in their statements about the climate of the North. He had a little experience of it, and he knew it was a fine climate. There was one matter which he should like to bring under the notice of the

Minister, and that was the appointment of a "principal assistant" in the large State schools. Some years ago this position was abolished, when, owing to financial stress, retrenchment was necessary, and it had not since been revived. At the present time the appointment of principal assistant practically rested with the head master. When the head master was obliged for some cause or other to leave his school, he appointed one of the assistants to act as head master during his absence. He believed that in the bulk of cases the head teachers strove to do what was fair, but there were cases in which appointments had been made of teachers to act as head teachers during the absence of the head master when those teachers were not fitted for the position, either by rank or experience. Now that the status of teachers had been restored, and the finances of the State were in an improved condition, it would be a good thing if the department reverted to the old practice of appointing a principal assistant teacher. People would ridicule a business man if he appointed a junior of the firm to occupy the position of manager during his absence, when it was known that that junior was not qualified, by ability or experience, to fill the position. But that kind of thing had taken

[Hon. P. Airey.

place from time to time in some of our public schools. He was quite satisfied that the Home Secretary could recall instances where such things had occurred. Would it not, then, be better for the efficiency of the school, and for the comfort of the teachers, if the department reverted to the old system, and appointed a principal assistant in all the larger schools? This matter had been referred to on a previous occasion, when it was pointed out that the present system was the cause of a good deal of friction. He hoped the Minister would consider this matter, and that assistants who were so entitled from their rank and professional abilities would be appointed to the rank of principal assistant. Head teachers would welcome such an appointment, as it would relieve them of the responsibility which they did not care for, and it would give far more satisfaction to assistant teachers. When the system of appointing a principal assistant was in force it worked successfully. He believed the Home Secretary had at one time occupied that position, and that he knew the disadvantages of the present state of things. He hoped the hon. gentleman would be able to assure the Committee that something would be done in the direction of reverting to the old system of appointing a principal assistant in the larger schools.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): With regard to the item of £250 for "Instruction in Agriculture," he noticed that the following paragraph appeared in the annual report of the department:—

Should funds be available, this action may result in a small provision being made on the next Estimates to enable seeds and plants to be supplied to approved schools, and in arrangements being made for an agricultural expert to visit the schools and give suitable instruction and advice to the teachers and pupils.

The amount proposed to be voted was not a very large sum for providing seeds and plants and the services of an agricultural expert, but, of course, there were many schools in which instruction in agriculture would not be given. With regard to the transfer of teachers from the North, he was very sorry that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had not lived in the North. He (Mr. Forsyth) had lived in the North for a good many years, and he could say that anyone who was of opinion that the climate of the North was equal to the climate of Brisbane was very much mistaken. It was a good climate in some respects, but it was very hot and dry during the summer months, and anyone who had lived there for a number of years must feel the effect of the climate. He must say that whenever he had gone to the Minister for Education to ask him for a transfer of a teacher in the North, the hon. gentleman had always met him very fairly, and in almost every case had been able to effect the transfer. With regard to the item of £2,750 for "School Requisites, Books, etc.," the sum voted last year was £2,000, and the amount expended was £1,400; but there was also another item of £750 for "Requisites for Provisional Schools." Then there was an item of £2,420 for "Promotion of Pupil-teachers." He did not see any item in the report of the Auditor-General corresponding to this, unless the amount was added on to the salaries.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is included in the salaries.

Mr. FORSYTH: Then the report stated that a sum of £1,776 was needed last year to provide for classification increases to 100 male assistant teachers. There was no record of how that money was expended, as no reference was made to it in the Auditor-General's report.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Auditor-General takes no account of separate items like those; they are added on to the salaries.

Mr. FORSYTH: There was another item to which he would like to refer—the item of £1 742 for “Special Allowances to Prevent Reduction of Emoluments.” Was he to understand that that money was included in the salaries and allowances paid to teachers?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. FORSYTH: It would be better to have these items shown separately.

The HOME SECRETARY: That would mean a rearrangement of the Estimates.

Mr. FORSYTH: That might be a very good thing. With regard to the item of £80 for “Instruction in Cookery,” that was a very good thing, and he thought it would be an advantage if the Government spent a little more money on the teaching of this subject.

Mr. J. LEAHY: There was an increase of £750 for school requisites and so forth. The Minister stated that the provision made was nearly exhausted, and would have to be replaced, but he did not explain how the money was used or what the object was.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is for books.

Mr. J. LEAHY: A great many of the children provided their own books, and still they had to pay quarterly school money. As there was a sum of money placed on the Estimates for the purpose, he did not know what they wanted to collect money for. Why have a boxed-up system of that kind? He would like the Minister to explain what system was followed.

The HOME SECRETARY: The explanation was very simple. The pupils of the State schools were supposed to provide books for their own use at home, and they were also supposed to pay a certain amount per quarter for money to buy ink, pens, and other little requisites. But besides that there was the question of the books that were used in the school, and which it had been the custom of the department to provide. During the last two or three years that vote had been cut down—he was inclined to think that it had been cut down somewhat severely—so that in many cases the supply of school books had become very much run down, and it was with the idea of making up that deficiency that the vote had been increased. The hon. member for Carpentaria asked about the amount for Provisional schools. It was formerly the custom to provide for Provisional schools in the Education Estimates, but that custom had been abandoned, and it now appeared in the Works Estimates. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley brought up the question of the need of appointing a principal assistant. Some years ago that system existed, but it had been abandoned, he believed, for financial reasons. As far as he knew, the system worked very well indeed. Of course, at the present time, without any official recognition, there was always someone recognised as head, and he was inclined to think that it might be a wise thing for the department to adopt some method of officially recognising the first assistant. It would not cost anything, but he would point out a difficulty in the way. It was possible the department might send some assistant and call him “principal assistant,” but he might not get on very well with the teachers. That was the difficulty, otherwise there might be something in favour of the system.

Mr. J. LEAHY: He understood that some of the pupils did not contribute anything towards the fund, while others paid 2s. a quarter. Why was that so?

The HOME SECRETARY: It had never been the custom of the department to supply books for the children's use at home, and it had

never been the custom to supply such requisites as pens and ink. The result was that a custom had sprung up of making a small levy, which he thought was provided by the regulations of the department. Generally speaking, it was something very trivial. In a big school like the Normal State School it was something like 2s. 6d. a quarter, whereas in the country schools it amounted to about 6d. a quarter. In the Normal State School there were a number of admirable appliances which were most desirable to have, and those were supplied out of the quarter money. In the country schools they could not expect to get those things; in fact, the people could not afford to pay for them, and the quarterly allowance was kept down to something like 6d. a quarter. Of course in every school there were a number of poor who could not afford to pay, and in those cases where it was recognised it would be a hardship to enforce it, they were passed over.

Mr. J. LEAHY: That was exactly what he wanted to know. He did not think it was satisfactory—whether it was 6d., 1s., or 2s. 6d. a quarter—that some of the children should be asked to pay for things for others to use. It would be far better if the State provided the lot. They spent £350,000 a year on education, and he did not see why they should be so economical over a small matter of that kind. He noticed that last year they had 1,786 teachers, and this year only 1,750—a decrease of thirty-six. How was it they had less teachers this year?

* Mr. REINHOLD did not think the question of the expenditure of the £2,750 had been properly explained. That £2,750 was what the department had to give for the supply of books, maps, slates, ink, pencils, pens, and sundry other things—at any rate, they used to. With regard to quarter money, that matter rested entirely with the school committee and the head teacher. Some schools collected no money at all; others collected 3d., 6d., and even 2s. 6d. a quarter, for which many small things were supplied. When drawing was introduced an order went forth that the drawing was to be taught without expense to the department.

The HOME SECRETARY: When was that?

Mr. REINHOLD: About twelve or fourteen years ago. The schools, out of that fund, provided notices to be sent to the parents when the children were absent; also, quarterly or monthly reports.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Why do some children pay and others do not?

Mr. REINHOLD: It depended on what the teacher or the committee decided should be supplied out of the fund how much it [10 p.m.] would be. There were some children who did not contribute, as their parents could not afford to do so. The department knew nothing about the fund, and had nothing whatever to do with the matter. There was no compulsion about it. The children who did not contribute were debarred from some of the privileges which came out of this fund. It was a pitiable state of affairs that the parents of many children could not afford to contribute.

Mr. PAGER: Is there a black mark placed against them.

Mr. REINHOLD: No.

Mr. LESINA: Is it known who pay, and who do not?

Mr. REINHOLD: Yes. They could not help knowing. The leader of the Opposition raised the question of £540 being provided for promotions amongst 450 teachers, but the hon. gentleman did not quite grasp the situation. It was only a matter of how the promotion came about.

Mr. Reinhold.]

If a teacher high up in the service died, and his place was filled by a teacher under him, that would bring about a number of promotions to the vacancies. With regard to the position of principal assistant, he believed it had been abolished primarily under the Special Retrenchment Act, and because there was some dissatisfaction expressed among teachers at the way these positions were granted to different teachers, and it was really bad administration on the part of the department.

Mr. McDONNELL: Do the teachers desire it?

Mr. REINHOLD: Yes; they desired it to be reintroduced. A staff of teachers might be well disposed towards one another, and no difficulty might arise when the head teacher was suddenly absent from school, but there were cases where this condition of affairs did not exist when he went away unless it was known that some particular individual was to take charge, and he could not always know that he was going to be away on a certain day. These cases had arisen, and there was dissatisfaction on the staff because someone was "bossing the show."

Mr. McDONNELL: It had been mentioned that the head teacher always had a favourite. In the case of one of the schools in Brisbane, the head teacher went away, and simply to avoid friction in reference to the appointment of a *locum tenens*, he did not make any appointment at all. The result was that there was no one in charge, and it was simply chaos. In other cases head teachers had appointed juniors to take charge, putting them over the heads of teachers who were their seniors. He hoped the Minister would look into the matter and revert to the old system, as the Minister himself admitted that the old system had a great deal to recommend it.

The HOME SECRETARY explained that there was a decrease of eighty-seven pupil-teachers and an increase of fifty-two assistant teachers, chiefly owing to the promotion of pupil-teachers—a decrease, in the aggregate, of thirty-six. As he had mentioned, five State schools had been closed. Then a number of pupil-teachers had become classified, and no other pupil-teachers had been taken on in their place.

Mr. J. LEAHY: He was sorry to hear that so many teachers had been reduced, and that there were a number of schools closed.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was because the attendance went down.

Mr. J. LEAHY: There was a yearly increase in the population, irrespective of deaths, of 14,000, and yet they had thirty-six less teachers and five schools closed. He was surprised that the Government had resorted to such methods of economy.

Mr. LESINA noticed that the amount for cleaning the schools was increased from £11,900 to £12,000, yet they had thirty-six fewer teachers and five fewer schools. Why was it necessary to expend more money in cleaning fewer schools? With regard to the grievances in connection with the transfer of teachers, the same grievance existed in connection with other departments of the service. Certain lengthmen were able to keep alongside their little holdings, while others were sent far away. It was the same with the teachers. Although it was an annual complaint, nearly every boy or girl in the Education Department who was a son or daughter of a member of Parliament was allowed to stop around Brisbane. The members of Parliament must be exercising some influence to enable them to keep their children in the schools around Brisbane.

Mr. KERR: My daughter was transferred straight away as soon as she was classified. I believe in them all taking their share.

[Mr. Reinhold.]

Mr. LESINA: He was glad to hear the hon. member for Barcoo say that; but there were other members of Parliament who would take fine care that their families were not sent out West. They would move heaven and earth if an attempt were made to shift them. He would like to see the Minister for Public Instruction making an attempt to shift them, and they would find the members of Parliament sitting on the doormat of the office of Public Instruction. He had three boys attending the South Brisbane State School, and they required more books in connection with their school lessons than he required for the whole of his legislative duties. They required a hugh leather bag to carry these big books. Why these books were necessary he did not know. He noticed that the department had given its approval to the production of a circulation of a little privately-owned journal amongst the school children. There must be thousands of pupils attending the State schools, and it must be a splendid thing for the owner of that journal, as all the children had to buy it. Why could they not turn out a little journal for their school children just as good as a private individual? There was no supervision over these journals at all, and while he was looking over his boy's copy he noticed a religious lesson in one of them. He strongly objected to his boy having to buy books with religious lessons in them, because he strongly disapproved of it. His boy was expected to do the lesson, and he did do it. They had proof that their education was not free, and there was proof that it was not secular because religious instruction was deviously and suspiciously engineered into it per medium of this journal. He hoped the Cabinet would step in and deal with this matter.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Who selects the lessons?

Mr. LESINA: It was a free-and-easy system. It was supposed to be submitted to the Minister, but whether it was or not he did not know. He would like the Minister to tell if Mr. Barlow supervised and edited this publication.

Mr. J. LEAHY: He has had a good religious training and he was in the Salvation Army once.

Mr. LESINA: That hon. gentleman had belonged to a good many religious denominations. If they wanted such a journal, let them issue one themselves—one that was edited by the competent staff of inspectors connected with the Education Department. In one issue there was a lesson on a boomerang—a distinctly Australian aboriginal weapon—and that lesson contained in a couple of pages a dozen fundamental misstatements. Why should their school children get a tangled mass of theological haggis placed before them which it was utterly impossible for them to mentally digest, and incorrect information regarding a weapon like the boomerang? Those two cases alone were sufficient to justify the department in supervising the lessons in a proper manner. He believed the proprietors promised not to allow any more religious lessons to appear; but the department should be able to turn out a decent publication for themselves. His boy, nine years of age, had a dozen different sorts of books in order to acquire a smattering of education. He strongly objected to religious lessons, written by a second-class parson, being sold to him at 1d. a month, and circulated among thousands of other children throughout Queensland where the instruction was supposed to be free, secular, and compulsory. He knew the Home Secretary had children attending the same school as his own, and the hon. gentleman must see that publication. He asked him, as a pedagogue, to go carefully through it and note the number of mistakes, and then submit it to

the Secretary for Public Instruction, and ask him if it was a fair thing that the children of the State should be compelled to absorb stuff of that character. He was in favour of a monthly journal.

HON. R. PHILP: The Minister approves of it.

Mr. LESINA: He questioned the Minister's fitness to be an authority on theology, although the hon. gentleman ought to be about the best authority, for he had tried them all. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: His attention was drawn to the fact, a few months ago, that there were such lessons as the hon. member spoke of appearing in those books—lessons which he thought should not have been there. In the old school books there were numbers of hymns printed, and no objection was taken; but, as their system was supposed to be secular, he thought such lessons should not appear in their school books. He understood the Minister had given orders that in future those things should be strictly supervised, and that such lessons should be omitted.

Mr. LESINA asked if the increase in the vote for cleaning schoolrooms, etc., was due to the increase in the number of schools?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes. There are thirteen new schools.

Mr. LESINA: With regard to the vote for "Instruction in Agriculture," he believed arrangements were made to hold classes to instruct teachers in agriculture. The other day, at Mackay, Mr. Riddell, the Inspector of Technical Colleges, in addressing a meeting of school teachers in connection with the establishment of such a class, stated, according to the *Queensland Education Journal* of 1st June, 1906, that, as Dr. Maxwell had refused his permission, Mr. Easterby, of the Mackay Sugar Experiment Station, could not conduct the class. It was a pity that the services of one of the best men in the State could not be availed of because another Government officer like Dr. Maxwell should stand in the way.

Mr. REINHOLD asked if the teachers who were noted for promotion in the early part of the year would receive promotion under these Estimates?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Question put and passed.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £6,509 be granted for "Secondary Education." Some time ago a reduction was made in the endowment to Grammar schools from £1,000 to £500 per annum. Last year a further amount of £150 was granted to each school, and from 1st July, 1906, each would receive £750 by way of endowment. In addition to that, the Government proposed to pay each school a further amount of £250, in return for which the schools would be required to give five district scholarships, tenable for three years, the scholarships to be awarded by the Secretary for Public Instruction. The ordinary scholarships and bursaries would be taken out as usual.

HON. R. PHILP: Are they to be awarded as the result of competition?

The HOME SECRETARY: The winners would be taken from the competitors for the ordinary scholarships. There would be the usual twenty-seven scholarships for boys and nine for girls, and there would also be the usual number of bursaries. There was no Act with regard to scholarships or bursaries. Parliament provided the money, and the department issued regulations.

HON. R. PHILP was very glad that the Government were going to restore the endowment to the Grammar schools. The amount should never have been reduced. The country Grammar schools would be very pleased at the increase, and he was sure they would be quite prepared to provide education even for ten additional pupils in return for the increased amount. There was a vote of £900 for "Exhibitions to Universities"—£100 for three exhibitions, tenable for three years—and there were further sums of £100 by way of a "Grant in Aid of University Extension," and £100 as a "Special Grant to Students" in connection with the University extension movement. That was £1,100 per annum which might be saved if they had a University of their own. They had a splendid site. If the Government would not advance the whole amount for the establishment of a University, they might contribute a part, as they did in connection with State and Grammar schools. They might offer that, if the people of Queensland would find one-third of the amount up to £10,000, they would find the other two-thirds, and after that they might endow the University. None knew better than the Home Secretary that Queensland wanted a University badly. (Hear, hear!) It was all very well saying that they wanted technical education more than a University; but if they had a University they could train the teachers for their own technical colleges. In every State in Australia except Western Australia there was a University. Queensland could afford to pay for a University now, as we had a surplus last year and another big surplus this year. If we wanted men of expert knowledge we had now to [10 30 p.m.] send out of the country for them.

Why should we not educate those men ourselves? Our boys were as bright and as smart as the boys in other countries, and our best boys were leaving us altogether. He was told that one-third of the young fellows who went to the Universities down south did not come back. One of the most eminent physicians in Melbourne at the present time, Dr. Moore, was a Brisbane boy, and there were other cases in which bright and intelligent Queensland youths had not returned to this State.

Mr. REINHOLD: There is quite a colony of them in California.

HON. R. PHILP: We had the finest site possible for a University, and he believed that if the Government would say that they would find two-thirds of the cost of erecting a building, the people would start to-morrow raising the other third of the cost. The Government pretended that they were a people's Government. Well, a University in Brisbane would be a University for the poor man's son and not for the rich man's son. The rich man could send his son to Sydney or Melbourne, but the poor man could not afford to do that. In Scotland they had four Universities before they had the population we had in Queensland at the present time, and those Universities were mostly availed of by the sons of the middle and poorer classes. It was time that something was done in the way of establishing a University in Queensland. Some time ago a vote in favour of the establishment of a University was carried in the House. Surely the Government would not ignore the vote of the majority!

Mr. REINHOLD: Governments often do.

HON. R. PHILP: He had heard the Premier say that no Government could afford to ignore the vote of the majority of the House. He understood that £5,000 a year would be sufficient to maintain a decent University in Queensland, and if we had a University it would afford

Hon. R. Philp.]

an opportunity for the brightest of our lads to obtain a higher education. We had been a colony for fifty years, and yet we had done nothing towards the establishment of a University, as compared with what had been done in other States. South Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand had each a University. Sydney had also its University, and there were 1,000 students attending that University, many of whom were from Queensland. He hoped the Minister would consult the Premier and be able to tell the Committee that the Government would do something in this matter.

Mr. McDONNELL: Personally, he should very much like to see a University established in Queensland, but before we establish a University we should place our secondary education on a better basis.

Mr. J. LEAHY: They boast that it is the best in the world.

Mr. McDONNELL: He did not know who made that boast, but he did not believe that it was the best in the world. He thought it was a most unsatisfactory system. Our secondary system was subsidised by the State, and the State had no control over it, not even sufficient control to compel the trustees to present a report. In 1904 the Government reduced the endowment to Grammar schools to £500 a year. Last year they increased that endowment to £650, and this year they were restoring the former endowment of £1,000. The Government stated that in consideration of the increase of £250 the Grammar schools were to provide for district scholarships to that amount. This simply meant that those scholarships would be confined to those districts in which Grammar schools were established. A poor boy at Charters Towers winning a scholarship would have to go to Townsville, and a poor boy in Bundaberg winning a scholarship would have to go to Maryborough. He believed that if the members of the Government themselves made an honest admission they would admit that they were not getting value for the money granted to Grammar schools. He was in hopes a few years ago, when they reduced the endowment to Grammar schools, that they were prepared to go to the extent of taking over those schools and placing our secondary system of education on the same basis as our primary system. But, instead of doing that, they were practically bolstering up and perpetuating an unsatisfactory system by subsidising Grammar schools again to the extent of £1,000 per annum. The present proposal simply meant that the district scholarships would go to Townsville, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Brisbane, and Ipswich. With regard to the Grammar schools not being able to carry on with the reduced subsidy, he did not think they had much to complain of under that head. Results were the best test of efficiency in any high school, and there were a number of high schools in Queensland which gave equally as good education as was given in the Grammar schools, and those high schools received no subsidy. Out of the 128 boys who passed the Sydney University examinations in June last, 41 per cent. were from schools other than Grammar schools. What legitimate claim had the Grammar schools to this extra £2,500 for district scholarships? If we were getting that return from our Grammar schools which we ought to get, they would be able to carry on and show good results without any endowment. Considering that they were rent free, and that they had all the advantages of long established schools, they were not entitled to this special consideration. The Government, instead of facing the position, as many people expected they would face it, had come down with a proposal which

simply perpetuated the old system. These district scholarships were a departure from the principle laid down by the House as far back as 1900, when it was decided that all Grammar school scholarships should be open to competition to pupils all over Queensland, no matter where they were educated, and that the successful candidates should have the right to take out those scholarships at any Grammar school or high school. Now the Government were giving £2,500 to practically a few districts for scholarship purposes, and placed the Grammar schools on the old basis under which they received £1,000 a year subsidy. He thought the Government would have done well if instead of dealing with the question in this way they had appointed a small commission to inquire into the question of secondary education. The results obtained from Grammar schools bore no proportion to the large amount of public money which had been expended upon them, which was an evidence that some radical alteration was absolutely necessary, and the alteration which he should like to see was for the Government to take over the whole of the Grammar schools. He believed that they could be worked economically by the Government. They would give far greater satisfaction, and no section of the community would then have an advantage over the other. He would like to hear something from the Minister as to what the Government proposed to do about the secondary system of education. To his mind they were departing from the principle that was laid down in the House many years ago.

Mr. J. LEAHY: The question of secondary education had been dealt with very fully by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and he would confine himself to a question which created a great deal of mild excitement some four or five years ago. It was discussed very fully throughout the State—that was the right of giving those who won a scholarship to take that scholarship where they liked. That principle was acknowledged. He thought it was carried out by the Government of which the leader of the Opposition was the head, and was supported by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. He supported it very strongly himself, as he thought it was right and fair. Under the Act the Government could give a sum not exceeding £1,000 a year to each of the Grammar schools, and it was never contemplated that they would cut it down. But the Act stated they “may” give that amount, and the Government last year reduced the amount below the £1,000. This year they increased Schedule C from £500 to £750, and they had another £250 on the Estimates in the shape of special scholarships. He would like to know from the Government, if they got that money, why they had not restored the amount in the original form? There must be some reason for it. The result was that although boys might take scholarships they could not take them where there was a resolution of the House authorising them to take them. The Government were limiting where that scholarship could be used. Why should they go in direct opposition to the resolution of the House? He now came to the question of scholarships themselves. He thought it was very desirable that they should be conducted with the greatest accuracy and care. A most remarkable thing happened about two years ago. A certain school in Queensland—the Rockhampton school—sent up about eight candidates, and the remarkable thing about it was that seven out of the eight topped the poll, and he thought the other one came next. It was the most remarkable thing that ever appeared in history. It must have been a pure coincidence.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you cast any reflection on the Education Department?

Mr. J. LEAHY: No. If there was anything wrong, he did not think it happened there. The fact remained that it was the most remarkable thing in connection with a public examination that had ever occurred here, and he wanted an explanation of some kind.

Mr. GRANT: How do you account for it?

Mr. J. LEAHY: He could not account for it. He wanted the Minister to account for it. He could only say that it was the most extraordinary coincidence he had ever heard of.

Mr. GRANT: It is the first time I have ever heard any doubt cast on the Education Department in connection with these matters.

Mr. J. LEAHY: It was a most remarkable thing. It had never happened before, and would never happen again.

Mr. GRANT: It is a contemptible insinuation.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Did the hon. member deny the facts he had stated—that these boys all topped the poll—a most extraordinary thing?

Mr. GRANT: Not when you consider the capacities of Rockhampton boys.

Mr. J. LEAHY: How was it that they had never showed those wonderful abilities before nor since, if they were such brilliant boys? As a rule, they had sent only blockheads. Nothing of the kind had ever occurred before.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; at Charters Towers some years ago.

Mr. J. LEAHY: It must have been in days most remote. Here they had the same pupils, produced by the same stock, the same teacher teaching them—

Mr. GRANT: No.

Mr. J. LEAHY: If he were breeding horses, and put the same trainer to attend them, he would expect corresponding results; but here, under similar conditions, they had these most remarkable results.

Mr. GRANT (*Rockhampton*): He had not intended speaking on the vote, but he thought the contemptible insinuation made by the hon. member for Bulloo could not be passed unnoticed. The facts of the case were these: There was a new teacher, Mr. Tomkys, in the Rockhampton Boys' State School—one of the best teachers in the department. He went to school about 7 o'clock in the morning and gave the boys special instruction until the ordinary school hour. Then he kept them from 4 o'clock until 6 o'clock at night, and if any one of them was willing to get extra coaching, he was willing to do it. Moreover, he was assisted by Mr. Dummigan, a very capable assistant. It was the first time that Mr. Tomkys had sent any boys to be examined; and the result was owing to his own industry and the cleverness of the boys and the assistance of the chief assistant. He understood that the teachers found the extra strain in teaching for the Grammar school scholarship was too much, and they were now taking it in turns in the schools at Rockhampton.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Was it not a mistake taking it away from a teacher who got such good results?

Mr. GRANT: There was such a thing as giving the willing horse too much to do. The Grammar school scholarships were held under the same conditions in Rockhampton as in any other centre. An inspector was sent from the Education Department, and they also had supervisors. Did the hon. member suggest that the inspector had acted improperly? Or that the examination

papers had been sent out to the boys? Or that they copied? Or that the teachers gave the correct answers?

Mr. J. LEAHY: I said I did not think the inspector or any member of the department had anything to do with it.

Mr. GRANT: The insinuation was simply contemptible. The hon. member cast reflections on the officers of the department, on the teachers, and on everybody connected with it. The only conclusion they could come to from the hon. member's statement was that someone had cheated. He really was surprised to hear such a statement.

Mr. J. LEAHY: The hon. member for Rockhampton did not dispute his facts, and the lame excuses of the hon. member inclined him to think that there was something in it. Was it not a great mistake to take the pupils away from a teacher who gave such wonderful results? The hon. member stated that he (Mr. Leahy) reflected on the officers of the department. He did nothing of the kind. He interjected twice that he did not blame any officer of the department. It was a most remarkable thing in connection with the education system of Queensland that such a thing should happen, and he asked an explanation about it. No one could give that explanation. He did not know if anything was wrong. He did not blame the officers of the department. It was much more likely to come from the hon. member.

Mr. GRANT: The hon. member was more contemptible the further he proceeded.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Abuse is no argument.

Mr. GRANT: It was needless for him to say that he knew nothing about the matter. As a matter of fact, he was not in Rockhampton when the examination was held. The hon. member's insinuation could only be explained as cheating on the part of somebody in the department and that the examination was not carried out as all the other examinations were carried out.

Mr. J. LEAHY: I stated before I completely exonerate the officers of the department.

Mr. GRANT: The papers came from Brisbane and were opened by the inspector before the pupils.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Do the Education Department control the Printing Office?

Mr. GRANT: It was simply contemptible the way the hon. gentleman was [11 p.m.] attacking men outside, who were not in a position to defend themselves. His further insinuation about the Printing Office was just as baseless as his other insinuations.

Mr. J. LEAHY: The statements of the hon. member all sprang from ignorance. The language of a fisherman was not argument.

Mr. GRANT: You ought to know.

Mr. J. LEAHY: The general public wanted to know if there was anything behind it.

Mr. GRANT: No one dreamt of making such an insinuation except yourself.

Mr. J. LEAHY: It was such a phenomenal thing that the general public were talking about it.

Mr. GRANT: I never heard of it before.

Mr. J. LEAHY: It would be an excellent thing for the school and for the public generally if it could be explained. The lame excuse of the hon. member for Rockhampton was that he (Mr. Leahy) said it was done by some particular department. He was satisfied that the officers of the Education Department carried out their

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examinations as fairly as it was possible to do so. If anything went wrong—and he did not say it had—it must have gone wrong before it came to the Education Department. It would be satisfactory to know if nothing of the kind had happened, as it would relieve the public mind, and they would know that the schools had a fair deal and no favour.

Mr. GRANT: The hon. member now shifted the charge from the Education Department to the Printing Office.

Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not say so.

Mr. GRANT: The hon. member's further charge was as groundless and baseless as his other charge.

* Mr. REINHOLD: He had always held the opinion that the Grammar schools did not give them the necessary return for the £1,000 a year expended on each of them in the way of subsidy. Although he was not satisfied when the amount was reduced, he considered it would have been better if the Government had taken over the Grammar schools entirely and made them take a greater number of scholarships—boys and girls who passed the examination. So far as this £2,500 endowment was concerned, it seemed that they were getting more out of the endowment to Grammar schools than ever they got before. It was a better provision for the boys and girls concerned. As it was, ordinary scholarships cost the Government £16 16s. a year and bursaries cost £30. If he understood the Minister correctly, a district scholarship would cost £50.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is so.

Mr. REINHOLD: He presumed the department had made some arrangement by which these district scholarships would be the first prize, and not put at the tail end of it. At present they accepted boys for scholarships and bursaries on the same examination papers, but there was a certain condition attaching to bursary candidates. Their parents had to sign a paper of some sort, and it was not always the first one on the list who got it. Now that there were five bursaries, he hoped they would be allotted to the first boys on the list. The bursaries, he took it, would enable a boy at Charters Towers to take it out at Townsville Grammar School, and the boy at Bundaberg to go to the Maryborough Grammar School. The boys and girls were really in a better position than they were before. He did not believe they were getting enough for the £1,000 endowment that they used to give, but in this case they were getting more.

The HOME SECRETARY: He desired to make one or two remarks with regard to the charge or insinuation made by the hon. member for Bulloo.

Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not make a charge. I asked for an explanation.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member for Bulloo did not make an insinuation, then he did not know what an insinuation was. The occurrence was not so strange or unique as the hon. member imagined. He knew the case of a school in Charters Towers which for nine or ten years only won a scholarship now and again, and then in one year it suddenly carried off six scholarships.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Were they one, two, three, four, five, and six in that order.

The HOME SECRETARY: He did not remember that. He remembered that it was extraordinary, and it surprised everybody at the time. This school had never distinguished itself in this particular way before, and he never heard anyone make any insinuations about it

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when it took six scholarships. He could give the hon. member a number of similar cases. Mr. Earnshaw, of Maryborough, carried off a number of scholarships on one occasion. He knew another instance of a little country school where there were only 100 children, and on one occasion this school carried off a bursary and two scholarships.

Mr. PAGET: That was a Mackay boy.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was a much more remarkable thing than that performed by Mr. Tomkys at Rockhampton. Anyone who knew Mr. Tomkys would know that there was nothing remarkable about what he had achieved. He had known it to occur in schools that in one class there would be a collection of remarkably bright boys and in another class a remarkable collection of dullards. Mr. Tomkys went to Rockhampton as a head teacher. He was a remarkably able and brilliant man. He had simply had a stroke of luck, which he (Mr. Airey) had shown had occurred more than once before in the history of the department.

Mr. J. LEAHY: Nothing like this. In this instance every one of them passed—first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth on the list.

The HOME SECRETARY: With regard to district scholarships, the hon. member for South Brisbane spoke the truth when he said the public were getting more for their subsidy to Grammar schools than they had obtained hitherto. The original intention of the system was to give rewards for exceptional ability and brilliancy. Under the resolution of 1900 those boys, by passing in this way, were allowed to take up scholarships in other schools. With regard to the Grammar schools, the Government wanted to give back the £1,000 as they could afford it. At the same time they recognised that there was a general feeling throughout the State that the Grammar schools were not giving the satisfaction that they should do. Consequently it was deemed that it would be wiser to return the Grammar schools this £250, and request them to give something in the nature of a *quid pro quo* for the money they were receiving. He did not think the Grammar schools were giving perfect satisfaction to the public, and they never would until the Government brought in a Bill to make them part and parcel of the educational system of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member for South Brisbane raised the question of the bursary and the district scholarship. Under the present system a scholarship was valued at only £16 16s. a year, and it was recognised that scholarships could only be enjoyed by well-to-do parents, and that if the value were increased the boy in poorer circumstances might have a better chance of enjoying it.

Mr. McDONNELL: The little light thrown on the matter by the Minister surprised him a little. There was a difference made in the Estimates between scholarships and bursaries, and he did not know if it was the decision of the Government to grant them in the form of bursaries.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are only different in name.

Mr. McDONNELL: The district scholarship meant £16 16s. a year for three years, and the bursary meant £50 a year for three years. One of the objections he urged to the alteration of the bursaries would be removed if what the hon. gentleman said was the fact, as it would give the children of poor people in places where there was no Grammar school an opportunity of sending their sons or daughters to one of the Grammar schools.

The HOME SECRETARY: I made a mistake.

Mr. McDONNELL thought the hon. gentleman was making a mistake, and that his (Mr. McDonnell's) contention was justified. The benefit of the increased vote would be confined to the towns which possessed Grammar schools. He believed the district scholarships were being given contrary to the regulations approved of by the Committee in 1900, and carried into effect by the Philp Government. He regretted that the Government had taken up this attitude. These scholarships should be open to all on the same basis as the present scholarships. It was evident that the whole thing was for the benefit of the schools and not of the scholars, in accordance with the old pernicious system which had been condemned by the Assembly in 1900. They recognised that bright boys had been turned out by the Grammar schools; but apart from that, the results had not been at all in proportion to the expenditure. The Government recognised a couple of years ago that the Grammar schools could carry on with an endowment of £500, but now they turned round and gave them a further endowment of £250.

The HOME SECRETARY desired to correct a mistake he had made. When the matter was originally discussed, he remembered the method he had alluded to of increasing the value of scholarships was advocated, and he was of the opinion that it was decided to grant only five scholarships. The thing was subsequently modified, and it really meant that there would be five scholarships for the first year, ten for the second year, and fifteen for the third year. The reason for the change was that it was recognised that, if they gave fifteen scholarships every year of the ordinary value of £16 16s. per annum and tenable for three years, there would be fifteen the first year, thirty the second year, and forty-five the third year, which would imply an expenditure of £750.

Mr. TURNER thought the time had arrived when the State should take over the Grammar schools. For many years the State had been endowing schools which were really for the benefit of the children of wealthy people only. It would be very much better if the Government, instead of continuing the endowment to the Grammar schools, increased the vote for technical education.

Mr. LESINA: The matter of the establishment of a University had been lost sight of in the reference of the hon. member for Bulloo to scholarships.

The HOME SECRETARY: We discussed it one Thursday afternoon, and there was a pronouncement on the question.

Mr. LESINA: Apparently the decision then arrived at had not been acted upon, and was not likely to be acted upon. Without discouraging technical or secondary education, some attempt should be made to establish a University. There was an improvement in the revenue which justified it. He would suggest that the Government should take Government House as a site for the University.

Mr. McDONNELL: Take that vacant church on Wickham terrace, and make use of it.

Mr. LESINA: They might do that. He had strongly recommended for years that they should abolish the State Governorship now that they had federation. The Chief Justice could act as State Governor, and in that way they would save £5,000 a year. That amount might be devoted to endowing a University, whilst they could use the Government House for the University. In that way they could kill two birds with one stone.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the question of a

University on this vote. It certainly was referred to by other hon. members, but, strictly speaking, it is not in order to discuss the question now.

Mr. LESINA: The Grammar schools should be taken over by the State. Labour members generally held, when sitting on the other side, that those schools did not do as satisfactory work as they should have done. The number of schools and the expenditure showed that they were paying altogether too much for their whistle. They were paying £10,000 in supporting those institutions, which were mostly for the children of wealthy parents. That amount had to be contributed by the general taxpayers, many of whom grumbled because they were not even to get a Provisional school established in their districts. They knew very little about the conduct of the Grammar schools. Their accounts were audited. He noticed on page 89 of the report of the Auditor-General that the books of the Rockhampton Boys' Grammar School were kept in a satisfactory way, but the property account did not appear in the ledger, and that was the second time the audit inspector had pointed this out. He also noticed that although the books of the Ipswich Girls' Grammar School were fairly well kept, and the banking had been pretty regular, the arrears of fees to 31st December, 1905, were more than double the arrears at the close of 1904, and depreciation had been written off on 31st December last. No effort was apparently made to recover fees, owing, probably, by wealthy people. The Government knocked off the endowment in response to a pretty unanimous agitation in that Chamber, and nothing had occurred to justify the proposed increase. There were ten schools—six boys and four girls. Each of them had a board of seven trustees, four of whom were nominated by the Governor in Council. The trustees engaged expensive staffs of teachers. Some of them had very few pupils. The Brisbane Boys' Grammar School had an attendance of 241 last year. The average attendance at the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School last year was 109, and at the Ipswich Boys' Grammar School the average was sixty-eight. The expenditure at a school like that was £2,000 or £3,000 a year. The total income of the institution from endowment, school fees, and sundries was £1,463 1s. They had a liability of £14,280, and their assets were £14,280. Of the sixty-eight boys on [11.30 p.m.] the roll, fifteen were State school scholars, thirteen trustees' scholars, and forty were self-paying boys. Those figures represented a falling-off on the previous year, when the Government gave them £575 by way of endowment, and yet with a decreased attendance the Government now proposed to grant them £1,000. Some 1,200 boys had passed through this school, which was one of the oldest in the State. The Maryborough Boys' Grammar School had eighty-three the first quarter, eighty-three the second quarter, eighty-five the third quarter, and eighty-seven the fourth quarter. The number of pupils in the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School for the last quarter of the year was eighty. There was an average of three boarders for the year—one State school scholar and five trustees' scholars. They had a big staff, and he supposed that if they made a calculation they would find that the average cost of the pupils was £50 per head. He believed that secondary education could be nationalised and run on State lines at a great profit, but he would prefer to encourage the extension of the technical system of education. If we spent £10,000 a year, in addition to the amount we were now spending, on technical education, we should do a great deal more good than we should do in spending this money on what were practically

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private Grammar schools, which did not take the trouble to collect their fees. Certainly he should like to see some different system adopted than the one now in force, which was a wasteful one, and which did not produce the results it ought to produce.

Mr. REINHOLD: The explanation of the Minister in connection with these scholarships discounted the system very much. What he wished to know was whether they were voting money for 1907-8 and 1908-9 as well as for 1906-7?

The HOME SECRETARY: They are ordinary scholarships tenable for three years.

Mr. J. LEAHY: They are subject to being voted, anyhow.

Mr. REINHOLD: They were asked to vote £2,500 for ten Grammar schools, and there were to be five scholarships for each school, which gave £50 for each scholarship. But according to the Minister the scholarships were to be of £16 each, so that five scholarships would amount to £80. Why, then, were they asked to vote £250?

The HOME SECRETARY: The reason is to make up the Grammar school endowment to £1,000 and put it on the old footing.

Mr. REINHOLD: They were voting £2,500 for scholarships, and they were only going to spend £800 for those scholarships, and the balance was to be given to the Grammar schools. This method of giving scholarships would limit the scholarships in two ways—it would limit the scholarships to parents who could afford to send their children to another town, and it would limit the selection of a school, which was a totally different principle to that which underlay other scholarships. Then there was the question as to what part of the boys and girls competing for scholarships were to be taken as competing for the district scholarships. Suppose the Townsville State schools sent up six candidates, and the whole of those six obtained ordinary scholarships, where was the Townsville Grammar School going to get its district scholarships from? If the Government were simply going to endow the Grammar schools to the extent of another £250 a year, it would be much better for them to say so, and to do away with the district scholarships altogether. He thought that this was a good opportunity, when making this additional endowment, for the Government to insist upon the Grammar schools presenting a report in a form prescribed by the Government. All the Grammar schools did not present reports, and those which did present them sent in reports in various forms. Some of the information given was useless, and some of the information which would be useful was not in the reports. He thought the Government ought to compel Grammar schools to furnish reports which would be useful to the House and to the country.

Mr. LESINA: The Ipswich Girls' Grammar School had fallen behind in its operations last year, and they declined to send in any report, and there was no means of compelling them to furnish a report. Yet they were asked to vote that school £1,000 subsidy without any protest. The trustees were making no effort to collect overdue fees from probably wealthy and well-to-do parents. The report of the Toowoomba Grammar School consisted of about five lines, and was absolutely useless. Why could not the Government insist upon those schools giving proper reports, and make this additional grant conditional on their collecting the fees which were due? He was surprised that the Government had not long ago devised some democratic and up-to-date method of dealing with Grammar schools.

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The HOME SECRETARY: In reply to the hon. member for South Brisbane he might say that the intention of the Government was to put Grammar schools back on the old basis of £1,000 endowment, but, at the same time, they deemed it advisable that the State should get from the Grammar schools more service than they had done in the past. For that reason it was proposed that they should take a certain number of scholarships. Properly speaking, to cover the contribution of £250, fifteen scholarships per annum should have been given by the Grammar schools. With fifteen the first year, fifteen the second year, and fifteen the third year, they would have amounted in the second year to thirty, and in the third year to forty-five scholarships, which would have meant three times the contribution to each Grammar school which was down in the Estimates. With regard to the point raised by the hon. member for Clermont, that it was advisable that the Grammar schools should send in a report, he did not think it was an exorbitant request, still he was afraid that the mere presenting of the report to the House would do little towards giving more satisfaction to the public. The real solution of the difficulty lay in taking over the Grammar schools by the State, and he hoped that next session something might be done in that direction.

Mr. GRANT agreed with the action of the Government, and that he had not got full value from the Grammar schools. The Rockhampton Grammar School made a request to the Government seven years ago that, besides getting the scholarships, they should take in additional bursary scholars, and they sent round circulars, but the other Grammar schools would not agree. Now, in addition to taking in the bursary scholars which the Government asked, they were giving three scholarships out of the trustees' funds as well, so that the Government were getting three extra scholarships from them.

* Mr. REINHOLD pointed out that the endowment to scholarships was not voted, but was in the schedule, and if the sum for district scholarships was not exhausted he did not know what the Minister would do with the balance. If only £800 of this vote was spent on district scholarships this year, by what authority would he hand over the other £1,600 to the Grammar schools? The scholarships were only five of £16 each to each Grammar school.

Question put and passed.

SCHOOLS OF ARTS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £11,855 be granted for "Schools of Arts and Technical Education." There was an increase of £1,250 in this item for schools of arts. Last year a subsidy was paid at the rate of 5s. per £1, the maximum subsidy not to exceed £150. The endowment in connection with sugar-mills had been increased from 5s. per £1 to £1 per £1. With regard to technical education, there was an increase of £975. There was a more liberal rate of endowment under the differential scheme which came into operation on 1st January last, and there was an increased number of pupils attending technical colleges, and a development in the work. There was an increase of £50 in the item for "Pharmacy College," and an increase in the salary of the Inspector of Technical Colleges of £25.

Mr. J. LEAHY wished to refer to one or two matters on behalf of the leader of the Opposition, who was not in the Chamber. The vote for the North Brisbane Technical College was £2,000 this year. There was £2,000 voted for it last year, but it had received £2,500. South Brisbane had an increase of £200.

According to the Estimates, North Brisbane had the same as last year, but in reality it was £600 less this year than last year. He thought the North Brisbane Technical College was doing a splendid work, and beyond all question it was presided over by a very able man—not only an able man, but a zealous and painstaking man, capable and competent.

Mr. KERR: And one who has the whole system at heart.

Mr. J. LEAHY: He had not only got it at heart, but he thought of nothing else. He thought that instead of getting £600 less than last year it ought to get £1,000 more.

Mr. KERR was very glad the hon. member had brought up this matter, because its financial position was now very creditable considering the position it was in two years ago, and it had been brought about by the economy effected to a great extent by the reduction of the fees of the teachers. Not only the teachers, but the director also had suffered a substantial reduction in salary. This year they were going to finish up with a credit balance of £179, and he had no doubt that there would be fees coming in from the end of December to the end of the financial year in June. It was expected by the end of the year that they would require £3,000. The financial improvement in the college must be very gratifying to everyone connected with it, and he trusted the college would go on conferring its educational benefits. He was also pleased to see schools of arts at shearing-sheds and sugar-mills, and much credit was due to the late Minister for Education, who had given the endowment to shearing-sheds, which had since been extended to sugar-mills. Much advantage had been taken of the privilege in connection with shearing-sheds, with the result that the men spent their time better than they did before, and the Minister who initiated the system had every reason to be proud of the result.

Mr. LESINA: Do they take the books away?

Mr. KERR: No, they had the use of them at the library. The whole of the property was usually left with the storekeeper of the station, who was usually the secretary *pro tem*. Another advantage was that the regular hands on the station could procure any books. The accounts were audited by the Government auditor when he visited the nearest township. Managers and owners of stations had given assistance, and on some stations had gone to the expense of purposely erecting a place for the library, and there was not the amount of gambling in shearing-sheds which existed a few years ago.

Mr. GRANT regretted that a central college for Brisbane had not been established, as it would be a great advantage over the present system. If all the students in Brisbane attended one college, a better result would ensue, higher salaries could be paid to the teachers, and better apparatus required in connection with scientific subjects could be obtained. He thought it was

rather ridiculous that there should [12 p.m.] be four technical colleges in Brisbane teaching the same subjects.

He wished to say also that it was not right that a well-paid officer of the Education Department should compete in the teaching of the same subject with a man who had to make his living entirely out of the fees he obtained. Next year he hoped there would be only one college in Brisbane, with, perhaps, subsidiary colleges for teaching the elementary subjects. The students would then get better teaching, and there would be more money available for the purchase of expensive scientific instruments. He quite agreed that there should be differentiation in the endowment paid to schools of arts. The big

towns could well afford to do with less subsidy than the Western towns, in which there were no means of recreation except the school of arts. He did not even object to the Government subsidising the circulation of novels in the Western towns.

Mr. PAGET: It was gratifying that the Treasurer had been able to find more money for the country school of arts and to give such a substantial endowment to libraries established in connection with sugar-mills and shearing-sheds. It paid the State better to provide intellectual facilities for the people than to provide extra police protection. In regard to the Pharmacy College, he understood the increased vote was on account of the increased number of students. Could the Minister tell them at what rate schools of arts were endowed last year, and also the amount paid away in support of reading-rooms at shearing-sheds and sugar-mills?

Mr. LESINA thought the Government should next year introduce a Bill to amalgamate the Brisbane technical colleges, as it would lead to a saving of money and more effective work. He was pleased that the endowment to schools of arts had been increased. The institution in his district had, at its own expense, opened a free reading-room for the benefit of the old men in the district, to whom it was a very great boon, but owing to the endowment being reduced the room had to be closed. The money saved by the Government was hardly worth the discomfort and disappointment caused. He agreed with the suggestion that double endowment should be given to shearing-sheds, but the Government must insist on the books being properly kept. The Auditor-General gave a list of the schools of arts and technical colleges, the books of which had been examined by the auditors, and the remarks of the various auditors should be attended to before the Minister paid any more endowment to these institutions.

The HOME SECRETARY: In reply to the hon. member for Mackay, he might say that schools of arts were endowed up to the full amount last year; and in reply to the hon. member for Bulloo, that the North Brisbane Technical College, though only down on the Estimates last year for £2,000, received altogether £2,500 by the adjustment of the vote.

Question put and passed.

ORPHANAGES.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £24,147 be granted for "Orphanages."

At twenty-two minutes past 12 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN called upon the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Grant, to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. GRANT thereupon took the chair.

Mr. LESINA said that on looking through the report he noticed that the Infants' Home at Brisbane, for which £450 was voted, and over that amount expended, had only twenty infant inmates. It therefore cost over £20 per head to keep the infants in that institution.

Mr. BOWMAN was pleased that since the last Estimates were discussed provision had been made to enable mothers to look after their own children. The one regrettable feature about the new arrangement was that the allowance was so much smaller to a mother than to a foster-mother; practically, it was about one-half the amount. That was an anomaly which he hoped would soon be done away with.

Mr. Bowman.]

Mr. PAGET also felt that it was very hard that a widow of good reputation who desired to keep her children should only be allowed one-half the amount paid to strangers who took care of orphans. A mother with three children must go out to work, as she could not support herself and her children on [12.30 a.m.] 7s. 6d. per week. The expenditure last year was equal to between 5s. and 5s. 6d. per week per child; and he hoped that before the close of the financial year the Minister would redraft the regulation so as to allow mothers a greater sum than was paid at present.

Mr. WOODS agreed with the views of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the hon. member for Mackay. The case which he believed led to the framing of the present regulations occurred at O.K. A father and mother died on the one day, leaving six children. He brought the case before the Government on two occasions, and the Home Secretary gave him all the assistance he could. The uncle of the children offered to support and educate the children if he was allowed 15s. a week; but all he could get was 7s. 6d. for three children. Not long afterwards the uncle was himself killed, and then the children were taken to Ravenswood by another uncle. The hon. member for Kennedy had interested himself in the case since then. It was a most pathetic case. He hoped that in the near future the regulation would be altered so as to permit of mothers who kept their children receiving the same allowance as foster-mothers. It was ridiculous to expect a mother to support her children on half the amount, particularly in North Queensland.

Mr. NORMAN was very pleased that a regulation had been issued allowing mothers who brought up their own children some consideration, because good mothers would rather suffer than allow their children to go into the hands of strangers. At the same time he did not contend that they should receive the same amount as was granted to foster-mothers, who took children to make a profit out of them, and who could not be expected to feed and clothe them at a loss.

Mr. PAGET found that the Inspector of Orphanages stated that there were 1,728 children in the institution. The Minister for Public Instruction stated in his report that 569 of those children were boarded out, which left only 1,159 to be provided for out of the fund to which he had referred. The cost would therefore be 7s. instead of 5s. 6d. per head per week, which made the claim of the mother who was prepared to take charge of her own children rather stronger.

Mr. REINHOLD felt rather pained to find that this Government had made use of the sympathetic natures of hon. members to make a profit out of mothers of fatherless children.

The HOME SECRETARY: This means a lot more expenditure to the Government.

Mr. REINHOLD: If the children had to be provided for in some way, and foster-mothers were paid a certain amount while their own mothers were paid a smaller amount, there appeared to be a discrepancy.

Mr. KERR said that in 1893 he and Mr. Hoolan, who was then leader of the Labour party, endeavoured to get some assistance from the Government for a widow with three children, and the Government of the day distinctly stated that it was laid down by the law that such assistance could not be given, and they would not give it. He had tried on several occasions to get past Governments to grant an allowance of

[*Mr. Paget.*]

at least 2s. 6d. per week, but they absolutely refused even that small allowance, and the reason they gave was that there were some mothers who were not capable of looking after their children, which was quite true. The department was always against giving it to the mothers, but he trusted that they would see their way to give them an increased amount.

The HOME SECRETARY: A system of this kind existed some years ago, and it had to be abandoned because it was so shamefully abused. In New South Wales it had cost £60,000 or £70,000 per annum. These women were at present supporting their children without any assistance, but they were now told that in some mysterious way the State was going to make a profit out of it. The report of the New South Wales department showed that, although many worthy women had been assisted, this system had been attended in many cases with pernicious results, and relatives who formerly helped their mothers now renounced their family responsibility and ties of relationship. Women now often relaxed their efforts and claimed an allowance because a neighbour who had been regarded as less worthy had been granted one, and false representations were made to obtain money; but, at the same time, the withdrawal of the allowance was not recommended, as it would inflict hardship on many deserving families. He could not institute a comparison between the cost of foster-mother and a mother, because the child had no claim on the foster-mother, who simply took it as an occupation. The child had undoubted claims on its mother, who was bound to exert herself for the support of her child. It was not intended by this aid to exempt the mother from personal exertion, but to give her some valuable assistance, and although it was not as much as he would like to see, he submitted it was a substantial amount. In a system like this, they always ran the risk of undermining personal independence. Herbert Spencer had come to the conclusion that we demoralised more people by charity than we assisted. Some hon. members thought that the Government was not generous because they had fixed the minimum at 2s. 6d., but the minimum in New South Wales was 1s.

Mr. REINHOLD asked if there were any women at present who had children who were boarded out by the State to foster-mothers?

The HOME SECRETARY: He could not get the exact number, but he believed there was a fair number.

Mr. REINHOLD: Even if there was half a dozen it was plain that there would be a saving to the Government in that respect.

Mr. WOODS asked if anything had been done by the department in connection with the case he had referred to. He believed it was the most serious case which had ever taken place in the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Scott informed him that there had been no application before the Government in connection with this particular case. If one was sent in he had no doubt it would be considered.

Mr. WOODS was surprised to hear the hon. gentleman say that no application had been sent in, as the hon. gentleman himself helped him to get the case relieved. The case was placed twice by himself before the Cabinet.

The HOME SECRETARY: Has an application been sent in to the Cabinet?

Mr. WOODS: An application went in in the ordinary form over a year ago.

The HOME SECRETARY remembered the hon. member speaking about the case twelve months ago, but the regulations had [1 a.m.] only been in force a few months, and there was a particular form of application to fill in. If the hon. member got it filled in the matter would be dealt with immediately. Exactly the same system was applied in connection with the indigence allowance. No notice was taken of applications unless they were in the proper form.

Mr. WOODS: The matter had been before the Cabinet twice, and the hon. member for Kennedy had interviewed Ministers on the subject. He understood it was that case which was the origin of the altered regulations, and it was the duty of the Minister when the regulations were altered to intimate that assistance could now be given in that case.

Mr. BOWMAN understood that it was only widows and deserted wives who came under the regulation. He hoped something would be done in the case of a grandmother who looked after orphaned children. He hoped the hon. gentleman would take such cases into consideration.

The HOME SECRETARY: The regulation would require to be altered.

Mr. LESINA: It had been proved conclusively in New South Wales that taking children from their parents and handing them over to foster-mothers encouraged the most thriftless section of the community. All the thriftless and unnatural mother cared about was to get rid of her children, and if the State would take them and hand them over to a foster-mother she did not care how many she produced. It was the most unworthy section of the mothers of New South Wales who were reaping the advantage of the system of giving to foster-mothers a larger payment for the support of children than was given to mothers. He did not think the hon. member for South Brisbane was far wrong when he said that the State made a profit by paying mothers instead of foster-mothers for the support of their children, because the foster-mother received 6s., whereas the mother only received 4s. a week for a child. The principle on which this Government seemed to be acting was that if they could induce the mother to keep her children the State would make more out of it. If a woman had two children and kept them herself the State would allow her 6s. a week, but if she handed them over to a foster-mother the State would pay 12s. a week for them. That was exploiting the natural affection of a true woman who would naturally stick to her children.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The ACTING CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL—
STATE FORESTS AND NATIONAL
PARKS BILL—EXPLOSIVES BILL.

MESSAGES FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning these Bills without amendment.

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