

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 7 OCTOBER 1910

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FRIDAY, 7 OCTOBER, 1910.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (W. D. Armstrong, Esq., *Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

DEATH OF KING EDWARD VII.,
AND ACCESSION OF KING
GEORGE V.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I have this day received a letter from His Excellency the Governor, conveying a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, which I shall now read to the House:—

“[COPY.]

“ *Queensland, No. 106.*

“ Colonial Office, Downing street,
“ 2nd September, 1910.

“ Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch No. 63 of the 22nd July, transmitting copies of resolutions passed by the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

“ 2. In reply, I have to request that you will convey to the members of the Council and of the Assembly the thanks of His Majesty the King for their messages of sympathy with himself and with Her Majesty the Queen Mother, for their congratulations on his accession, and for their assurances of loyalty to his Throne and Person.

“ 3. I have also read with appreciation the report of the motion made by Mr. Kidston in the Queensland Parliament, which I have not failed to lay before His Majesty.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient, humble servant,

“(Sgd.) CREWE.

“ Governor Sir William MacGregor,
“ G.C.M.G., C.B., &c., &c., &c.”

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

CHIEF SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT—CHIEF OFFICE.

(*Mr. J. Tolmie, Drayton and Toowoomba, in the chair.*)

Question stated—That there be granted to His Majesty, for the services of the year 1910-11, a sum not exceeding £6,725 for the “Chief Office, Chief Secretary's Department”—since which it had been proposed that the vote be reduced by £1 (*Mr. Lennon's amendment*).

Question—That the sum of £6,724 only be granted—

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) asked the Premier upon what basis invitations were sent to members to accompany the Scottish Commission to different parts of Queensland? He did not think there was any intentional neglect on the part of the Government, but there did seem to be some neglect shown. It appeared to him that undue favour had been shown to members on the Government side.

He might instance the Southern part of the State. Mr. Ryott Maughan, the senior member for Ipswich, might have been invited, but he was not. Then take the Central portion of the State. It seemed apparently that the only one, so far, who had been invited to accompany the commission, had been the hon. senior member for Rockhampton. He thought invitations might have been sent out to some of the members of the Opposition in the Central district, as well as other parts of the State. He had been asked why he had not gone with the Scottish Commissioners, as well as other members, and his reply was, "It is manners to wait until you are asked." At the same time, his constituents did not know the reason of his absence, and he would certainly have liked to accompany the commission so far as his electorate was concerned. He would be very pleased indeed to hear from the Premier what basis was adopted in regard to the invitations.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*): He would be very pleased to give the House the very fullest information as to the lines adopted in regard to the matter. Hon. members would understand that the essential thing they should have in view in inviting people to accompany those commissioners was to get people who knew something about the districts, and something about the industries carried on in the districts through which the commissioners were going.

Mr. HARDACRE: I know something about my district.

The PREMIER: He had explained the matter to members of the House, whom he had asked to meet him and discuss the matter, quite regardless of whether they supported the Government or not. That was at a time when he understood that the commissioners would only be able to go as far north as Bundaberg. At that time he had no idea any of them were going any further, and members representing the districts the commissioners were likely to visit in the South were invited to discuss—not as to whether they would go themselves. He (the Premier) plainly told them that he was not wanting members of Parliament on that job; he was wanting farmers and settlers who had succeeded in the country themselves to go with the commissioners and explain how they had succeeded, and how other people could succeed just as they had done.

Mr. HARDACRE: Is Ken. Grant a settler of the Central district?

Several other HONOURABLE MEMBERS interjecting,

The PREMIER: Did hon. members want the information? It was quite immaterial to him (the Premier), but he was quite willing to give it.

Mr. LENNON: Certainly we want the information.

Mr. MURPHY: We are all in good temper, you know.

The PREMIER: That was the general rule adopted in regard to the invitations so far as the South was concerned. Of course, it was quite natural that members of Parliament should want to accompany important peregrinating parties to their constituency—it was quite natural, and in some cases that had been arranged for. Last Thursday evening he learned that four of those commissioners were willing to go to the Centre and North, and he made a hurried arrangement

for them to go North. He asked the member for Fassifern, who was nearest to him at the time, to take the commissioners through the pastoral districts of the Central, West, and Northern districts, as the hon. member was well acquainted with those districts. That hon. member found he could not very well go, and he suggested that Mr. Ramsay, of Oondooroo Station, should be asked—a man who was thoroughly acquainted with the pastoral industry.

Mr. LENNON: A very good man.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately, it happened also that Mr. Ramsay could not go, and it was suggested on Friday or Saturday morning that he should try and get the Hon. W. H. Campbell, of the Upper House, and, perhaps, taking him all round, they could not get a better man to guide the commissioners and explain the conditions in the Central West than Mr. Campbell. He (the Premier) also thought he would ask Mr. Hamilton, the member for Gregory, who also was well acquainted with that district—chiefly on its industrial side—he was very well acquainted with the pastoral districts; but, as the second reading of the Land Bill was coming on, that hon. member did not think it right for him to go, as he wanted to take part in the debate on the second reading of that Bill. He had then asked Mr. Payne, the member for Mitchell, but he also found it inconvenient to go. It was not imperative that he should ask any other hon. member. The hon. member for Clermont was not particularly acquainted with that industry, and he (the Premier) knew quite well that when the hon. member for Gregory would not go, because of the Land Bill, the hon. member for Leichhardt would have been greatly shocked if it had been suggested that he should go.

Mr. HARDACRE: You might have asked me, anyway.

The PREMIER: That was the position. He wanted hon. members to understand that he wanted to get the men who were best fitted to explain the business the commissioners came here to do.

Mr. HARDACRE: I am not blaming you.

The PREMIER: It was found later that the commissioners could go up as far as Cairns, and he (the Premier) thought it was eminently desirable that they should see the tropical country under sugar, and the high tablelands of the country about Atherton, and it occurred to him that Mr. Mann, the member for Cairns, was about the best man he could get to go with the commissioners, and as the hon. member was quite willing to go, he (the Premier) asked him to go. He was very glad that the hon. member had consented to go, because he was an excellent example of what could be done in Queensland. The hon. member was a sample of what a Scotchman could do for himself, even in the tropical districts of Queensland. He came out here twenty odd years ago with nothing save his hands to help him, and now he was in a position of independence, and he (the Premier) wanted him to go with the commissioners and explain to those men what he had done for himself, and what, no doubt, a large number of other men in Cairns had done just as well.

Mr. LESINA: Australians have done it in a shorter period than that. I know several.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Cairns was perhaps the best pilot he could

Hon. W. Kidston.]

get for that district. (Laughter.) There was another matter. When those four men arrived here at half-past 9 o'clock on the Saturday night, he had not seen any of them. He did not go to the border to meet them, and he thought it would be courteous on his part to meet them on their arrival in Brisbane, and he arranged a small private party to meet them. These people were not visiting Brisbane—they were only travelling through—and he arranged a small private party, consisting of the men travelling with them and two or three members from either side of the House, representing the districts to which the commissioners were going, to meet them and have just a friendly glass. He thought at the same time that it would be a very desirable thing if members of Parliament should have an opportunity of meeting and having a chat with those men, so arrangements had been made for an afternoon on the "Lucinda," to which members of both Houses had been invited, and there was to be a dinner afterwards. He would give further particulars a little later, but in the meantime he thought he had given a perfectly accurate idea of the lines that had been followed. He hoped the visit of the commissioners might be productive of much good to Queensland.

Mr. FERRICKS: The Federal Government has done something good in bringing them out.

The PREMIER: He thought the Federal Government had done some good—the last Federal Government—though he would not have mentioned it, for the idea was Mr. Deakin's—a very good idea—and carried out by Mr. Fisher. He hoped that neither during their visit here nor afterwards would any indication of party feeling be shown in dealing with those men or their mission here.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: It was a matter in which both sides had a common interest.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: And though they might differ about a great many things they could agree to be even friendly in regard to this matter.

Mr. HARDACRE accepted the explanation given by the Premier, who had no doubt done his best in the time at his disposal. At the same time it was rather an anomaly that there was nobody representing the intermediate part of the Central district. As it happened, the Land Bill went through in time for him to have joined the party; and even if he could not have gone, he could have arranged for somebody at Emerald to meet them. He hoped the mission would be productive of much good to Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: There was an amendment before the Committee, and he would give it his support. He objected to increases of salary to people already overpaid. Last year the Under Secretary got an increase of £100, and this year he was down for another increase of £100, bringing his salary up to £800. There were nine persons in that office, and the total amount of their salaries was £2,275. Of that amount the Under Secretary and the chief clerk took £1,260, leaving £1,015 for the remaining seven persons. He found the same thing all through the departments. It was representative of our social system, in which a few individuals took the bulk of the wealth and the remainder possessed only a small portion. Personally, he

had nothing against the Under Secretary, but he objected to increasing the salaries of highly-paid officers who already received sufficient remuneration. Many people with wives and families got no more than £100 a year. No doubt the State was prosperous at the present time, but that was no reason for continually increasing the salaries of highly-paid officers. He thought they ought to level up the lower-paid officers before increasing the salaries of the higher-paid servants of the State. He was not speaking against the individuals but against the system. The hon. member for Fassifern said he thought it was a fairly large increase, and then he changed his mind. Maybe there was no necessity for the hon. member to get down to the gutter where he would meet the common herd—he had always been in a position of affluence.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Who are the common herd?

Mr. COLLINS: He (Mr. Collins) belonged to the common herd himself.

Mr. FORSYTH: Well, speak for yourself.

Mr. COLLINS: He was ready to speak for himself. The Premier said they ought to have certain positions which he called the "blue ribbon." Why?

The PREMIER: To encourage the common herd. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. gentleman should do something for the common herd, because they could not all get the blue [4 p.m.] ribbon. There were only nine or ten who could get the blue ribbon by becoming Under Secretaries. It did not follow that the nine Under Secretaries possessed the ability that some people made out. There were 999 people who had just as much intelligence as they had. They could only have five or six occupants of the front Treasury bench out of the seventy-two members, but that did not follow that they represented the cream of the brains of Queensland. There were better men outside.

The PREMIER: Remember what the hon. member for Fassifern told you about the big prize and the good race.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Fassifern referred to the University, and he said that these high positions would be open to University students. What chance had a poor person got of getting to the University? The children who would go to the University would be the children of the higher-paid officials. They would therefore have all the advantages and get these blue ribbons. He was going to oppose the big increases for all he was worth until such time as the under-paid persons throughout the public service were levelled up.

HON. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*): He was one of the blue ribboners to this extent—that he intended to support the increase given to the Under Secretary. If they wanted good men they must pay them good salaries, and they must offer attractions for good men to come into the service and remain there. That was what his experience had told him, and it also told him that unless they paid good salaries they would not attract good men into the service at all.

Mr. ALLEN: Provided they make the best use of his services.

[Hon. W. Kidston.]

HON. E. B. FORREST: The present Under Secretary gave a lot of service to the State and he did it very well, and £800 was by no means a big salary.

Mr. FOLEY: What about the mill hands?

The PREMIER: They get good wages.

Mr. FERRICKS: They get £1 5s. a week, which works out at 4½d. per hour.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members to restrain themselves from their desire to interject. All interjections are disorderly, and the excellent temper of the Committee this afternoon I hope will continue throughout the day.

HON. E. B. FORREST: He regarded £800 as by no means a big salary for an appointment of this kind. It was only a fair salary, and was considerably under the salaries paid for a similar position in the other States of the Commonwealth—in all the big States, at any rate. The Government made a mistake in not fixing the salaries of all the Under Secretaries at £800 a year, and then there would have been no trouble at all.

Mr. FERRICKS: And yet you voted against 8s. a day for the railway navvies last session.

HON. E. B. FORREST: The hon. member who has just sat down said that nothing had been given to the common herd, but if he looked at page 14 of the Treasurer's Financial Statement he would see these words—

The members of the public service, school teachers, railway employees, and the members of the Police Force, have shared in the prosperity, and the amounts set out in the next table will show that all branches of the public service have during the last seven years participated to a very considerable extent in the general prosperity of the State—

Branches of the public service under the	£
Public Service Board	76,500
School teachers	81,500
Police Force	29,300
Railway employees	135,200

£322,500

The adoption of an eight-hour working day in the railway service in August, 1907—

that is, three years ago—

is responsible for an additional charge of £30,000 per annum to the State.

Was that not fair treatment to the public service? They had had four prosperous years, and the public service of Queensland had shared in that. Did that amount not include the common herd that the hon. gentleman referred to? Queensland was growing, and they would have to increase the salaries still further as the officers had more important functions to perform, especially those at the heads of the departments. That had been the history of the other States, and was probably the cause of their paying better salaries for similar positions. The Under Secretary had been in the service for many years, and exhibited a peculiar fitness for the position he occupied. It was common knowledge that he was peculiarly fitted for the position he occupied. It was an absurd statement to make that the other Under Secretaries did ten times the work he did.

Mr. ALLEN: I said they had ten times the responsibility.

HON. E. B. FORREST: The hon. member said ten times the work, and it showed that in making that statement he did not know what he was talking about. As regarded

big salaries, he had heard members opposite say that no man living can earn £1,000 a year.

Mr. HARDACRE: No; that is not so.

HON. E. B. FORREST: It was said by members opposite. What did they find now? Why, the very men who made those statements were now in Melbourne. Were they earning £1,000 a year? No; they were earning £2,500 a year. (Hear, hear! and Government laughter.) That showed that the ideas of those members with regard to high salaries must have undergone a tremendous change.

Mr. FERRICKS: Who fixed the salaries of members of the Commonwealth Parliament?

HON. E. B. FORREST: They did themselves, and notwithstanding the extraordinary high salaries they were paid now they wanted an increase.

Mr. ALLEN: No; they did not fix their salaries. The Constitution fixed them.

HON. E. B. FORREST: They started at £400 a year, and then they raised their salaries themselves to £600; and they were not satisfied with that, but it was stated that they intended to raise the amount to £1,000.

Mr. ALLEN: Who told you that?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I must call upon the hon. member for Bulloo to refrain from interjecting so frequently.

HON. E. B. FORREST: The members of the Commonwealth Parliament raised their salaries by £200 a year, making the amount £600, and now they said they could not live on £600 a year, and they wanted £1,000 per annum, though when they were living in Queensland they were content with the miserable £300 a year paid to members of the Assembly.

Mr. HAMILTON: I am not content, anyhow. (Laughter.)

HON. E. B. FORREST: That showed the change which had taken place in the ideas of the hon. members opposite with regard to high salaries. He asked hon. members to look at the work performed by the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department and the work performed by those men in Melbourne, and say who was the better paid. He intended to support the £800 for Mr. McDermott, and he hoped the Committee would not hesitate a moment in passing it.

The PREMIER: He did not wish to speak on the question now being discussed, as he had spoken on it before, but simply desired to remind hon. members that this was the ninth day for Supply, and there were only thirteen other days for the Estimates. They were now on the first vote for the Chief Secretary's Department, and there were ten more votes in that department, some of which were very well worth discussing. Of course, members could divide the time in any way they liked; he was only pointing out the position.

Mr. HAMILTON did not know whether this was the proper place to refer to the question of appointing justices of the peace, but he thought it was, as that was the first vote for the department which dealt with the matter.

Mr. LESINA rose to a point of order, and asked what was the question before the Committee?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The question is that £6,724 be granted for the "Chief Secretary's Department—Chief Office."

Mr. Lesina.]

Mr. HAMILTON: Well, I will bring the matter up after the amendment is disposed of.

Mr. HARDACRE: Judging from the observations of the hon. member for Brisbane North, that hon. member was entitled to rank as an eminent author of fiction, as he could draw very well upon his imagination. He (Mr. Hardacre) had been a member of the House ever since the inception of the Labour party, and he had never heard any member of the party say that no man living could earn £1,000 a year. The hon. member for Brisbane North missed the whole point of the amendment. Members of the Opposition were not objecting to the increase in the salary of the Under Secretary on personal grounds, but were objecting to what was commonly known as "greasing the fat pig," and giving scarcely any increase to the lower-paid officials. The Under Secretary got an increase of £100, while two messengers, at £120 and £75 respectively, got only £20 between them, and two typists at £100 each received no increase at all. What members on that side wanted was to see fair treatment accorded to the lower-paid officers of the service.

Mr. LESINA: Apparently the object of the leader of the Opposition, in moving that the vote be reduced by £1, was to give the Committee an opportunity of expressing their sentiments with regard to the disparity between the salaries paid to different officers in the Chief Secretary's Department. If the amendment were carried, he supposed those who supported it meant it to be an indication to the Government that they were dissatisfied with the present method of apportioning increases of salary, and that they wished the Government to give increases to the lower-paid officers, either on the Supplementary Estimates or on next year's Estimates. Of course, Governments very largely did just as they liked, and it was hardly necessary to get an expression of opinion from the Committee.

The PREMIER: That has always been a characteristic of Governments.

Mr. LESINA: When they had the power, they used it to the top of their bent. If a Government were backed up by intelligent, independent supporters, who stood to their principles, the Government would not play fast and loose with public funds or with political principles. It was straight-talking, straight-voting supporters that kept a Government straight. If the Government were distributing public moneys among public servants on an unfair basis, it was the duty of their supporters and not of the Opposition to bring them to book. Public servants generally worked against the Labour party, and why should they bother themselves as to whether public servants were well or ill paid? It was none of his business, except on the broad ground that he believed in paying every man a fair wage for the work he did. He believed that the salaries of Under Secretaries should be evened up—he had advocated that last year. They should be paid a standardised wage, just as workmen should be paid a standardised wage. Of course, all classes should be paid on a properly appraised value. He believed every Under Secretary was worth £800 a year. If he was not, then he was not worth employing. If the work a man did was valueless, then he should be sacked; but they should sack him in good times, when he could obtain other employment. This was the very time to prune down a service that was overgrown, in spite of all the Premier and his officers had done in that direction. There were many officers whose only work was to carry bundles of papers from one room to

another, and now was the time to get rid of them, when there were plenty of opportunities for absorbing their labour. If they waited until a drought came, they would help to reduce the price of labour in an already overstocked labour market. There should be a standardised wage for Under Secretaries, and that should be £800 a year. The time would come when Queensland would be so big and prosperous that it might be able to pay bigger salaries to its Under Secretaries. Men would be trained in the University to fit themselves for those positions. At present our Under Secretaries were paid less than was paid to Under Secretaries in the other States, although hon. members were always boasting of the wonderful resources and prosperity of their own State. They should also pay the lower ranks of the service better salaries. The deputy leader of the Opposition had adopted a similar course last year, and, as his advice had not been followed in connection with the preparation of this year's Estimates, the hon. member felt fully justified in moving this reduction of £1. He (Mr. Lesina) felt justified in voting for the amendment to emphasise his dissatisfaction with the action of the Government, and that was his only reason. He did not disapprove of the increase to Mr. McDermott. He recognised he was a most valuable officer, who had over thirty years' experience in the service of the State, and his capacity could not be overestimated. He was not actuated by any spirit of hostility towards Mr. McDermott or to the policy of the Government in standardising the salaries of the Under Secretaries. He was only supporting the amendment as an indication that the lower-paid men should be paid larger salaries.

Mr. BOOKER (*Maryborough*) supported the increase of salary to the Under Secretary for a number of reasons. He had heard no reasons advanced on the other side why that increase should not be given. He took it that the argument on the other side was based on their own earning power: but that was not the standard by which Under Secretaries should be paid. The salaries of Under Secretaries should be fixed by Parliament and scheduled, and that would put an end to the annual discussion of increases. The general trend of the discussion had been to mix up the salary of the Under Secretary of the department with the salary paid to the office boy or the messenger. In no sense did he speak in a derogatory manner regarding the office boy or the messenger; but he contended that, as the Under Secretary was the permanent head of the department, his salary should be a guiding star for the best men in the public service, to which they could look when they entered the service. If they paid their Under Secretaries well, they would get the best that was in men, and the State would benefit by it. The present Under Secretary in this department earned £800 a year, and earned it well, and the State was well served in having a man of his capacity in the position. In arguing against the salary, hon. members were indirectly arguing against the occupant of the position. The two things were inseparable. It must be intensely derogatory to the best interests of the service when they found members on the other side, who might be future Ministers, discussing the salaries of their future Under Secretaries. It must leave an unpleasant feeling in the minds of the Under Secretaries, which must naturally militate against the best interests of the departments afterwards. He said that unreservedly.

[*Mr. Hardacre.*]

Mr. RYAN: That is a serious thing to say.

Mr. MURPHY (*Croydon*): He must say that he would not like to cause any of the Under Secretaries any bad feeling, but what about the poor unfortunate people at the bottom of the tree when these [4.30 p.m.] salaries were being fixed up? Did they have no hurt feelings when the men who were receiving big salaries got another increase of £100 per annum, while they were not brought up by even a paltry sixpence a day? They had heard the story of the two boys and the apple. One boy was eating an apple, and the other poor little fellow stood there and kept asking for a bite. "No," said the greedy chap, "I am not going to give you a bite," and so he went on getting rid of it; and at last the other kid said, "What about the core?" The other one said, "There ain't going to be no core." (Laughter.) That was the position in fixing up these Estimates. The lower-paid men in the service were looking for the core, but the higher-paid men in the service said, "There ain't going to be no core." Hon. members were not here to say any nasty things about the Under Secretaries because they got up and criticised the increases of salary. They were not finding fault with the Under Secretaries.

The PREMIER: Far better find fault with the Premier.

Mr. MURPHY: Occasionally, one got tired of taking any notice of the Premier at all. If it was not that the Premier, just by virtue of an accident, happened to be at the head of something like thirty-six or thirty-seven followers, he would not count in the House at all. There was a time even in the Premier's career when he did not count a snap of the finger in the House. The hon. senior member for Townsville used to be king in those days. He was going to vote for the reduction, as he did not see why they should give the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department an increase of £100 again this year. Let them do something for the lower-paid servants. They would hear, when they came to the Home Secretary's Department, that the police had been well treated, but you had only to come in contact with the police, as well as other public servants, to find out that there was a good deal of dissatisfaction in the service, and when they took up the Estimates they found that in every department the man who got a rise was the Under Secretary, who had got a rise the previous year. In the Chief Secretary's Department there was an increase of something like £170, of which the Under Secretary got £100, while the £70 was divided amongst the rest.

Mr. FORSYTH: There is a core, then.

Mr. MURPHY: They might say there was a bit of a core, but the hon. member for Moreton might be able to explain to the lower branches of the service that if they were not getting the core they were privileged to get a pip. (Laughter.) He was very glad the leader of the Opposition had announced his intention of voting against any increases to the Under Secretaries this year. He thought they had been fairly paid. It had been pointed out that in other States they were getting paid better than they were paid here. That might be so, but during the last couple of years Parliament had endeavoured to deal as fairly as possible with the higher-paid officers of the service.

* An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You are a bit husky.

Mr. MURPHY: Yes, he was a bit husky, because he had been earning his money doing good work for the country. (Laughter.) That huskiness would wear away before half-past 10 o'clock to-night. (Laughter.) The Under Secretaries did not get husky. They would never see the Under Secretary of the department screeching out for the Premier; it was the messenger that had to jump and put himself right in the road of the Premier, and let the Premier's motor-car get over him sometimes, in the hope that the Premier would be able to look past the Under Secretary and see the little chap at the bottom, and give him a rise. That was one thing which had always given him a very kindly feeling towards the hon. member for Leichhardt. The hon. gentleman some time ago was a Minister of the Crown—certainly only a short period—and what did he do? The first thing he did was not to recommend that the Under Secretary of the Lands Department should get an increase of £100—he went and gave a little messenger boy an increase, and right throughout the Lands Department to-day that Minister's name was revered. (Laughter.)

Mr. MULLAN: Was not the Premier in that Cabinet?

Mr. MURPHY: The Premier might have been in that Cabinet, but he was looking after his own salary at that time. But, of course, being at the head of the dress-circle Government now, he had to see that the men who were in a position to wear dress coats received increases of salary in order that they might be able to keep up the style. When the Hon. the Premier got a motor-car, of course, everybody in the higher-paid ranks of the public service should be privileged to have a motor-car too; but those in the lower ranks, who built our railways, opened up our country, and did all the hard work for the State in the outlying portions, were not to receive any consideration at all. He thought it was the duty of the party on this side to try and help the lower-paid men in the service before they voted money to increase the salaries of those who were already receiving very fair salaries indeed.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): If the Government had brought in a Bill to increase members' salaries to £400 a year, he was quite satisfied that Bill would not have been defeated. Queensland was a very big State; it had not the population it ought to have, but last year the revenue was over £5,000,000. If hon. members went to any business firm in Australia which had a revenue of £5,000,000, they would find that the higher officers were paid three or four times the sum the higher-paid officers of the Queensland Government were paid. He was very glad there had been no personal attack made on the Under Secretary—they were only dealing with the position of Under Secretary.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: The Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department was the chief Under Secretary in the service.

Mr. MULLAN: You did without one, you know.

HON. R. PHILP: Things were very bad in those days, and there was a reason for it—he gave the salary to the widow. At the present time the country was prosperous, and there had been numbers of rises in all ranks

Hon. R. Philp.]

during the last five years. In his time the country was in a very bad state, and he was ashamed because he had to cut down salaries, but the Philp Government did their duty, and they cut down their own salaries too. Queensland could well afford to pay the Under Secretary £800 a year, as it was a very responsible position. The Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department practically dominated the whole Cabinet, as he ought to do. The Chief Secretary was responsible for every Bill brought before the House, and he had to get good advice, and his Under Secretary must be capable of going through all Bills before they were brought before Parliament. If they could not afford to pay £800 a year for that position, they could not afford anything at all.

MR. HARDACRE: What about the lad porter?

HON. R. PHILP: He himself had worked in Brisbane for £20 a year. Everybody had to make a start. They could not afford to give a lad messenger £3 or £4 a week to start with. At one time any number of lads were willing to start in an office for nothing at all, but he was very glad that was not so to-day. As a matter of fact, a lad going through an office was going through a school, and very often he would learn more in an office than in a school. Any number of men had spent all their lives in the Government service and they were fit for nothing else, and they ought to be well paid. As an employer he liked to see men getting good wages—he always paid good wages, and he liked to see the Government pay good wages too. They paid the Chief Commissioner for Railways £2,500 a year, and most people who knew Mr. Thallon said he was well worth the money. The Chief Commissioner in Victoria got £4,000 a year, and yet they only paid their labourers 7s. a day. The better the man at the head of a service the better the service was conducted, and the better was the Government able to pay those in the lower branches. They were carrying on an enormous business in Queensland, and they wanted good men to see that the large revenue was properly spent. Nobody who knew the work could say that the Under Secretary in the Chief Secretary's Department was overpaid at £800 a year.

MR. HAMILTON: The hon. member for Townsville and the hon. member for Maryborough had argued from very different premises altogether to what the Opposition side had taken up. Opposition members had not argued that the Under Secretary was overpaid, but the reduction of £1 was moved as a protest against the big increases to the men at the top and no proportionate increase being given to the men in the lower branches of the service. He quite admitted, as the hon. senior member for Townsville had stated, they could not start an office boy on £3 or £4 a week, but in the lower branches of the public service there were men who had been there years and years, and who had wives and families, and they were drawing very small "screws." He was speaking to one the other day, in another department, who had got a £10 increase, but he was still only getting a little over £100 a year, and he had a wife and family. The Under Secretary of that Department got £100 increase last year, and another £100 increase this year, while the chief clerk Mr. Abell, only got an increase of £10. The hon. member for Townsville, when Premier, had abolished the office of Under Secretary altogether after the death of Mr. Dutton.

[Hon. R. Philp.]

HON. R. PHILP: I paid Mrs. Dutton the salary for some time. Mr. Stephens took up the work.

MR. HAMILTON: After the death of Mr. Stephens, Mr. Abell, the chief clerk, did the work, and the hon. member for Townsville stated at the time that since federation—since the Customs and Defence had gone—the chief clerk was well able to cope with the work.

HON. R. PHILP: They were very bad times.

MR. HAMILTON admitted they were bad times. He believed in paying good men good salaries, and he did not think the public servants of Queensland were paid higher salaries than the public servants in the other States, and they had quite as good a class of public servants in Queensland as in any of the other States.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAMILTON: What Opposition members protested against was what had been described by the hon. member for Leichhardt as "continually greasing the fat pig." The man at the top was in constant communication with the Minister, and his case was always brought under the Minister's notice, and he had a good deal to do with the recommending of increases to the other officers in his department, and it was a strange coincidence that the salaries of the Under Secretaries were always increased to such an exorbitant extent as compared with others. He did not like the remark of the Premier, that if hon. members insisted on the reduction, he would take it off the office boy.

THE PREMIER: I was only joking on the subject. I was pointing out it should not have been moved on the general vote, but should have been taken off one item.

MR. HAMILTON: If he thought such a thing as that would happen, he would certainly move the reduction of one item. Certain Under Secretaries had received increases this year, and they deserved such increases, but they had received increases out of all proportion to the increases given to the lower-paid servants. Nobody could say that this Under Secretary had more work than the other Under Secretaries, some of whom did not get such high salaries. It might be argued that the position of Under Secretary to the Chief Secretary was the blue ribbon of the service, and it might be on that ground that he was getting £100 or £200 a year more than some of the others. He was going to support the amendment, as a protest against continual increases to men in the higher ranks of the service, while fair consideration was not shown to men receiving lower salaries.

MR. LAND (*Balonne*) intended to support the amendment as a protest against continually raising the salaries of the higher-paid officials in the different departments while due consideration was not given to those in the lower grades. It was hardly necessary for him to refer to the fact that members in favour of the amendment were not attacking the officers concerned. In this office there were two typists, one born in 1853 and the other in 1881. One was appointed in 1898 and the other in 1900; and they were getting only £100 a year each. There was a messenger born in 1883 getting £120. He was appointed under the Queensland Government in 1908. There was another messenger born in 1891 getting £75. He had been in

the service only since 1908; but he was nineteen years of age, and if anybody was not worth more than £75 a year at that age he was not worth keeping in the service. He knew more about some of the other Under Secretaries than about the Under Secretary of this department, and he believed some of them were worth more than they got. He would like the Chief Secretary to give some information about the item "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses," for which £2,000 was voted last year and £3,000 was required this year.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Brisbane North*): To some extent he felt inclined to sympathise with the references to increases being [5 p.m.] given to the more highly-paid officers, but he did not intend to vote for the amendment. As far as the Under Secretary was concerned, he would rather vote for the increase to that officer than otherwise, because he believed him to have the best possible qualifications for the office. The position had been referred to as the blue ribbon of the service. There were many branches of the service where the staff had no possible chance of attaining to the position of Under Secretaries—the officers of Parliament, for instance. He thought Under Secretaries were fortunate in being closely associated with the Ministers. He recognised that there must be a certain relationship between a Minister and his Under Secretary—it could not be otherwise; and it was only natural that a Minister would do what he could for his Under Secretary. That was an opportunity that was not extended to other employees in the Government service, and it was for that reason that the administration of the service should be delegated to a board who would work on level lines for all. He agreed with his colleague, Mr. Forrest, that increases had been given to many of the juniors in the service during the last few years to a large amount, but at the same time he could not get away from the fact that there was still room for disappointment. They had a discussion during the parliamentary vote about the recommendations of the Speaker and President of the Legislative Council being too lightly regarded by Ministers in considering the Estimates. Holding the views he did as to the administration of the service generally, it led him to agree with the comments made in regard to the increases in the salaries of the Under Secretaries. He did not say that the Under Chief Secretary had less important work than the other Under Secretaries. He had work of a most delicate and difficult nature to attend to. He was not prepared to say that £800 a year was too much for the position, or even that it was not worth more. In deference to the views he held, he felt bound to make those remarks.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*) supported the amendment. There was nothing at all personal to the occupant of the position in what he had to say, as, so far as he knew him, he was a capable and competent Under Secretary. He repudiated the suggestion made by the junior member for Maryborough, Mr. Booker, that they could not disassociate the occupant of the position from the amendment to reduce his salary by £1. He regretted to hear that hon. member say that, in the event of the Labour party coming into power, the remarks they made in the House would necessarily remain in the minds of the Under Secretaries, and would not tend to the good business of the country. The hon. member for Maryborough was using

a two-edged sword. He did not know whether the hon. member suggested it as a reason that the Labour party should not come into power, or whether they would deal with the Under Secretaries if they did. He did not think that, even if the Labour party came into power, it would lead to any friction between the Under Secretaries and themselves because of their remarks in the House. (Hear, hear!) His reasons for supporting the amendment were—first, as other speakers said, that the increases to the lower-paid officials were not proportionate to the increase in the salary of the Under Secretary. It was the disparity of treatment.

Mr. WHITE: The lower officials are fairly well paid in this department.

Mr. RYAN: That might be the hon. member's opinion. Another reason he had for supporting the amendment was because of a matter which pertained more to the Premier than to the Under Secretary, and that was the manner in which the communications of the Agent-General, in his capacity in relation to the Savings Bank (Securities) Act of 1895, were dealt with. Those communications should be made to Parliament and not to any department. He would read the statutes bearing on the matter, and commend them to hon. members. Section 6 of the Savings Bank Act of 1870 read—

The Auditor-General shall half-yearly on or immediately after the thirtieth day of June and the thirty-first day of December of each year duly inspect count and audit the Government debentures and Treasury Bills held in trust as aforesaid for the Government Savings Bank and also ascertain that the residue of the said moneys including such of the same as shall necessarily remain in the hands of the Colonial Treasurer to the credit of an open account in the manner hereinbefore mentioned is invested in accordance with the provisions of this Act and make a special report of each such audit. And such report shall within seven days after the making thereof if Parliament be sitting and if Parliament be not sitting then within seven days after the next sitting of Parliament be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

That was a duty cast upon the Auditor-General by the Act of 1870. Then section 11 of the Savings Bank (Securities) Act of 1895 read as follows:—

The Governor in Council may empower the Agent-General of the colony for the time being, or such other agent or agents as the Governor in Council may appoint, or any one or more of them, to discharge, in relation to Government securities deposited under the authority of this Act at any places beyond the limits of the colony, such of the duties which are by section six of the principal Act imposed upon the Auditor-General as the Governor in Council may direct.

And with respect to such duties the acts of the Agent-General, or such other agent or agents as aforesaid, shall have the same force and effect as if done by the Auditor-General.

Certain duties were cast upon the Auditor-General by section 6 of the principal Act, and section 11 of the 1895 Act empowered the Governor in Council to delegate those duties to the Agent-General in England, and, in that capacity, the Agent-General acted as if he were the Auditor-General, and his reports had to be laid before Parliament. And the proper conduit for laying these reports before Parliament was through the Speaker of the House and through the President of the Legislative Council. The Agent-General was an officer of Parliament.

The PREMIER: Who said so?

Mr. RYAN: I say so. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. HARDACRE: The Act says so.

Mr. Ryan.]

Mr. RYAN: He said so on the authority of the sections which he had just read. In so far as the Agent-General represented the Auditor-General under section 11 of the Act of 1895, to that extent the Agent-General was an officer of Parliament, and not an officer of the Chief Secretary's Department at all. (Hear, hear!) He maintained that the attitude taken up by Sir Arthur Morgan, with regard to the action of the Chief Secretary's Department, was absolutely justified, and he would ask the patience of the Committee while he read the correspondence on the subject, which was published in the *Telegraph* of Thursday evening, 29th September, 1910. The first letter was from the Clerk of the Legislative Council to the Agent-General in London, and read as follows:—

Brisbane, 20th August, 1909.

Sir,—By direction of the Presiding Chairman, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your report, dated the 7th July last, upon Government securities held on account of, or in trust for, the Government Savings Bank and deposited in London under the authority of the Savings Bank (Securities) Act of 1895.

I am further directed to state that your letter was transmitted through the Chief Secretary's Office, which appears to be a most unusual proceeding. Hitherto the report for both the President and the Speaker has been forwarded direct to them, and I am to request that the practice formerly observed will be again resumed.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. W. COSTIN,

Clerk of the Legislative Council.

The Agent-General, Marble Hall, the Strand, London.

The next communication was a letter from Sir Arthur Morgan, President of the Council, to the Agent-General, and was as follows:—

Brisbane, 12th February 1910.

Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt, through the Chief Secretary's Office, of your letter of the 5th ultimo.

A similar letter was received some time ago through the same channel, and the Clerk, in acknowledging it, by my direction, expressed the opinion that such communications should be sent to the President direct instead of through the Chief Secretary's Office.

Such communications were formerly sent direct to the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and as that practice was clearly in accordance with the intention of the Savings Bank Act of 1870 and the Savings Bank (Securities) Act of 1895, I trust that in future the course previously observed will be reverted to.

I have, etc.,

ARTHUR MORGAN,

President.

The Agent-General for Queensland, Marble Hall, 409 and 410 Strand, London W.C.

Then there was a letter from the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department to the President of the Council, as follows:—

Chief Secretary's Office,

Brisbane, 18th May, 1910.

Sir,—Adverting to the letter which on the 12th February last you addressed to the Agent-General on the subject of his half-yearly reports on Savings Bank securities, and which has been forwarded to this office for advice, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that if you have any instruction to convey to any officer of this department, it would be advisable for you to communicate with him through this office, as all officers of the department have been directed to comply only with such instructions as they receive from the Chief Secretary.

I have, etc.,

P. J. McDERMOTT,

Under Secretary.

The Honourable the President of the Legislative Council, Brisbane.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN intimated that the hon. member's time has expired.

[Mr. Ryan.

The PREMIER: Mr. Tolmie, I shall—

Mr. HARDACRE: Let the hon. member for Barcoo finish his statement.

The PREMIER: I have not the slightest objection.

Mr. RYAN: He was not laying the blame for this matter at the door of the Under Secretary. The Premier was no doubt quite prepared to take the full responsibility of it.

The PREMIER: The full responsibility.

Mr. RYAN: Under the Savings Bank Act of 1870 and the Savings Bank (Securities) Act of 1895, the Agent-General, when appointed to this position in London, was to that extent an officer of Parliament.

Mr. FORSYTH: Who appoints him?

Mr. RYAN: The Governor in Council appointed him, and probably the Governor in Council appointed the Auditor-General, but once the Agent-General was appointed to that position he was an officer of Parliament to the extent mentioned in the section quoted. He was not an officer of the Chief Secretary's Department at all to that extent. As Agent-General he was no doubt an officer of the Chief Secretary's Department, but in his capacity under section 11 of the Savings Bank (Securities) Act he was not an official of that department. The Governor in Council might appoint somebody else to that position in London, and could the Minister then say that such person was therefore an officer of the Chief Secretary's Department? The principle underlying this matter was that reports of this kind should come to Parliament without the intervention of any Minister, and here they had the Chief Secretary intervening and diverting the reports of the Agent-General, in his capacity of Auditor-General, from the President of the Council and the Speaker of the Assembly to his own department. That was a matter which ought to engage the serious attention of every member of the House, irrespective of what party he belonged to.

Mr. BRENNAN: Do you think those reports should go to the President and Speaker as executive heads of the two Houses of Parliament, and not as trustees under the Savings Bank (Securities) Act?

Mr. RYAN: He thought those reports should go to them in their capacities as President and Speaker respectively. He was glad the hon. member had raised that question, because it was a moot point. He would read the latter part of section 6 of the Savings Bank Act of 1870—

and such report shall within seven days after the making thereof if Parliament be sitting and if Parliament be not sitting then within seven days after the next sitting of Parliament be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

The President and Speaker received the reports in their official capacity as officers of Parliament, and then laid them before both Houses. There was no authority for the reports going to the Chief Secretary's Department. The sending of the reports there opened the door to all sorts of abuses. It should not be placed in the power of any Minister to direct that those reports should go to himself. The Premier arrogated to himself a position that Parliament never contemplated. The position was a very serious one, particularly when they had a gentleman of the standing and capacity of Sir Arthur Morgan drawing attention to it, as he no doubt did from a sense of duty. For that reason he was going to support the

amendment for reducing the salary by £1. In doing that he had absolutely nothing against the present occupant of the office of Under Secretary, whom he considered a very capable officer.

The PREMIER: There was an amendment before the Committee, and if that amendment was to be considered as a vote of censure on the Chief Secretary it was legitimate to bring up this matter under it.

Mr. LESINA: Do you regard it as a vote of censure?

The PREMIER: Yes; he regarded it as a very serious vote of censure.

Mr. RYAN: So do I; it is a very serious thing.

The PREMIER: It was a very serious thing, but he was rather surprised at the lack of interest in the matter previously manifested by the hon. member for Barcoo. It was rather a singular thing that there was absolutely no justification for the attitude that hon. member took up—that this was done because he (Mr. Kidston), as Minister, might interfere with the report.

Mr. RYAN: I did not say that.

The PREMIER: On the contrary, the very attitude which the hon. member took up—that such report should not go through the persons interested—was exactly the reason why he changed the custom that had been previously followed. It was of no consequence to him or to any Chief Secretary whether the Speaker or some other person laid this sheet of paper on the table. Some hon. members might have looked up the report to see what it was. It was of no consequence whatever who laid it before Parliament.

Mr. RYAN: It might open the door to abuse.

The PREMIER: No; the alteration was made to close the door against any possible abuse—a very remote possibility, he admitted. The section of the Audit Act would show the duty laid on the Auditor-General concerning his annual report. It provided—

The Auditor-General shall transmit the same—

That was his annual report upon the finances of the State—
together with the annual statement aforesaid, to both Houses of Parliament.

The only way he could do that was through the President and Mr. Speaker. Why was the Auditor-General not to transmit his report through some Minister? For the excellent reason that he was dealing with the intromissions of Ministers for the year, and it would be quite improper that his report should be sent to any Minister to lay before Parliament. Parliament had therefore been very careful to instruct the Auditor-General in that case to send his report direct to Parliament. In regard to the report upon Government Savings Bank securities, the phraseology of the statute was quite different. Those securities stood in the name of the President and Mr. Speaker as trustees of the Savings Bank, and the only persons who could authorise their sale were the President and Speaker, whose property they were. All that the Auditor-General had to do with them was to count the securities every six months, and certify that they were all there. Now, did it not occur to the hon. member for Barcoo that the very worst persons to send such a report to were the President and

Speaker, for the very same reason that he did not send his report upon the Treasury accounts through the Treasurer?

Mr. RYAN: But he has to send it through them as the officers of Parliament.

The PREMIER: Here was the report in question (holding up paper)—simply a sheet of paper.

Mr. RYAN: To whom is it addressed?

The PREMIER: To the Chief Secretary. He would explain why the change was made. The phraseology in regard to the report to be made in respect of these securities was quite different from the phraseology in connection with the report on the Treasury accounts. The section read—

and such report shall within seven days after the making thereof if Parliament be sitting and, if Parliament be not sitting then within seven days after the next sitting of Parliament be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

It did not give him specific instructions, as it did in the other case, that he must transmit his report to both Houses of Parliament. It simply provided that it should be laid before both Houses of Parliament. The report was not a report by the Auditor-General at all. It was a report by an officer appointed by the Governor in Council to make an examination. That officer was the Agent-General. A year or more ago he (Mr. Kidston) found that some departmental inconvenience had resulted from different departments and different men in Queensland sending instructions to the Agent-General in London to do this thing or that thing. The only way in which they could get systematic business carried on was that a man should have only one boss. The Agent-General should only have one boss.

Mr. RYAN: Supposing somebody had been appointed other than the Agent-General, whom would he have had to communicate with?

The PREMIER: He would tell the hon. member how this came about. He caused instructions to be sent to the Agent-General, and he advised the departments here that, when they had any instructions to send to the Agent-General, they were to send them through the Chief Secretary's Department, so that the Agent-General would know whom he had to deal with, and to whom he was responsible. The practice of sending these reports to the President and Speaker, who owned the property reported upon, as trustees, had been going on for years. In accordance with the instructions which had been sent to the Agent-General, he sent the report to the Chief Secretary's Department. The instructions had no reference to this report. He (Mr. Kidston) never thought anything about it in connection with the instructions. He thought the report when it arrived was sent on by the department to the President and Mr. Speaker. Instead of complaining to the Chief Secretary's Department about something that the Agent-General—an officer of that department—had done, the President and Speaker wrote to the Agent-General, giving him instructions what to do; and the Agent-General wrote out and told the Chief Secretary's Department.

Mr. RYAN: Not as Agent-General.

The PREMIER: Yes, as Agent-General—as an appointee of the Governor in Council for this special work. The Agent-General told the department what he had been instructed to do; and the department wrote to

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the President and Speaker, advising them that, when they had any instructions to give to any officer of the department, to give them through the department. That was ordinary sound business. They then complained that the papers had been sent to the department instead of to them, and it was only then that he went into the matter to ascertain what had been done, and he found that the previous practice was a bad practice, just as it would be a bad practice for the Auditor-General to send his annual report on the finances of the year to the Premier asking him to present it to Parliament.

Mr. RYAN: The President and Speaker are not the only trustees. Are there not three?

The PREMIER: Yes. The Treasurer was one. He claimed that, in accordance with the Act, the trustees who could give instructions to dispose of those securities were not the proper persons to whom to send the report.

Mr. HARDACRE: Why should the Agent-General send a report about one person's property to someone else?

The PREMIER: The property was not theirs in a personal sense. It was the property of Parliament, but this [5.30 p.m.] House had put it in trust in the hands of the Hon. the President and Speaker and Treasurer, and wanted to know what they were doing with it, and it would be foolish to get the report as to what had been done through them. The thing was to get it through the head of the department, who happened to be the leader of the House, because the Chief Secretary was that—he was in immediate communication with this House, and had no interest—

Mr. CORSER: No control over the fund.

The PREMIER: And had no control over the fund. The Chief Secretary could not dispose of those securities.

Mr. RYAN: To whom does the Auditor-General report under section 6? He has to make a report half-yearly similar to the report that the Agent-General made.

The PREMIER: He should send it to the Chief Secretary. He gave instructions that all reports that had the general direction that they were to be laid before Parliament, when they were not dealing with the intromissions of Ministers, should be sent to the head of the department to which the Agent-General belonged. They were different entirely from the annual report of the Auditor-General.

Mr. RYAN: I am not speaking of the annual report of the Auditor-General.

The PREMIER: He wanted to show what the difference was. The reason why Parliament gave specific instructions to the Auditor-General not to send his report through Ministers, but to send it direct to Parliament, was just because the Auditor-General was dealing with the actions of Ministers, and it was not good to have his report to come through their hands. On the same grounds, there was no specific injunction to the Auditor-General or to the Agent-General that he should send that report direct to Parliament, and to send it direct to Parliament meant putting it through the hands of the only persons who could sell the securities.

Mr. RYAN: To whom is the Auditor-General's report, under section 6 of the Act of 1870, addressed?

The PREMIER: The Chief Secretary. He reported in accordance with the instructions of Parliament, but the Auditor-General

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—except by means of a certain style which was not considered an official way to do such a thing—the Auditor-General sent his report through the head of his department, who could lay it before Parliament.

Mr. RYAN: Who is the head?

The PREMIER: The Chief Secretary. This was a little storm in a teacup.

Mr. WHITE: A little paragraph in the *Telegraph*; that is the trouble.

The PREMIER: He admitted that there was an important thing underlying this. He claimed that the man who had been instructed to report to the general master should not, if possible, send his report to the man whose intromissions he had been reporting. He thought that was a good sound principle, and if hon. members would take the trouble afterwards to look this matter up, they would find the statutory provisions concerning which the Auditor-General reported, and for which the President and the Speaker and Treasurer were trustees, were quite different from the specific instruction that was given the Auditor-General concerning his annual reports, and the reason why these specific instructions were given to him concerning his annual report he had explained to hon. members. He thought it was the intention of Parliament that the Auditor-General or anyone reporting should not send his report to Parliament through the hands of the man whose intromissions he was reporting.

Mr. HARDACRE: Why did the Act specifically add the precaution that it must be tabled within seven days unless it recognised that it was to him through whom it should be sent?

The PREMIER: He did not want hon. members to miss the point that the wording of the provision that these reports should be laid upon the table of the House was a quite different instruction from that which was given to the Auditor-General concerning his annual report, and the reason for the specific injunction in regard to his annual report he had already explained to the Committee.

Mr. RYAN: There was a good deal of communication between the Treasurer and the Auditor-General.

The PREMIER: There were other two letters which the hon. member had not read, although they had been laid upon the table of the Council and had been printed; but as the matter had been brought up he might say that he thought the right thing had been done, and the mere accident of the Agent-General sending them to other officers instead of the President and Speaker had caused them to correct a mistake that had been made for many years formerly. He did not suppose there was much in it, but the right way was the right way, and it was the best way of carrying on public business that one person should be responsible for everything that was done in his office. He thought the hon. member for Barcoo, if he looked up the Act, would see that he (the Premier) had good reason for acting as he did.

Mr. HARDACRE: Mr. Tolmie—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot speak again. He spoke at 3.14, 3.52, and 4.15.

Mr. HARDACRE: That was so—he spoke twice on the main question, and once on the amendment.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the amendment was proposed on 30th September.

Mr. COLLINS said the Chief Secretary had given no reasons why the Under Secretary's salary should be increased. He found that in the State of Victoria, with a total expenditure of a little over £8,000,000, they did not pay their Under Secretaries any greater salaries than what were proposed to be paid here, with an expenditure of a little over £5,000,000. The Under Secretary to the Chief Secretary in Victoria got £800 a year.

The PREMIER: That is little Victoria.

Mr. COLLINS: He knew Victoria very well, and he knew the revenue of Victoria was £8,116,000 a year, and he also knew that the revenue of Queensland had not yet reached that figure.

Mr. CORSER: That is not the point.

Mr. COLLINS: The point was that the police were under the Chief Secretary's Department in Victoria, and therefore he had a right to assume that the Under Secretary would have a far greater amount of work to do than the Under Secretary to the Chief Secretary's Department in Queensland.

Mr. CORSER: Victoria has a smaller area.

Mr. COLLINS: On the basis of that argument, because he (Mr. Collins) represented a far larger area than the hon. member, he should get a very much larger salary. The Under Secretary to the Minister for External Affairs for the Commonwealth received £900 a year. He mentioned those figures because it had been stated by interjection that the other States paid far larger amounts to their Under Secretaries.

Mr. FORSYTH: What do they get in New South Wales?

Mr. COLLINS: New South Wales paid £1,000 a year to its Under Secretary to the Colonial Secretary, but he would point out that New South Wales had three times the population of Queensland. He did not wish to labour the point, but he wanted to know from the Premier why those large increases had been given.

On several HONOURABLE MEMBERS interjecting,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN said: Order, order! I have before stated that interjections are exceedingly disorderly, and I must ask hon. members to refrain from making them. I would also ask hon. members to address the Chair, as I am very jealous in that respect. (Hear, hear! and laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: He did not say anything about the personality of the Under Secretaries—he was speaking against the system of giving an increase to the Under Secretaries of £100 this year after having given them an increase of £100 last year. Why had not the messengers and clerks, who were not receiving a living wage, received increases? He noticed one clerk got £200, another £170, two typists at £100, a messenger at £120, and one at £75.

The PREMIER: I think the wages are very fair. So do the men who get them.

Mr. COLLINS: He had not consulted the men, and did not know any of them. The Premier considered the men were well paid, and that they thought so. Was it necessary for a public servant to approach the head of the department and ask for an increase? Did the Under Secretaries ask for an increase?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. COLLINS: If it was a wise thing to give the Under Secretary an increase with-

out him asking for it, was it not a fair thing to give those under the Under Secretary increases?

The PREMIER: They also got an increase without asking for it.

Mr. COLLINS: The increase was not proportionate.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Moreton*): The reasons given by the hon. member for an increase or a decrease were absolutely wonderful. The hon. member stated that the revenue in Victoria was over £8,000,000, while in Queensland the revenue was only £5,000,000, and, therefore, why should Queensland pay more? New South Wales paid their Under Secretary £1,000 as against £800 in Victoria, and the hon. member argued that, because the revenue in New South Wales was double the revenue of Victoria, the Under Secretary should get double the salary. Queensland had some Under Secretaries who had infinitely more work to do in connection with their departments than any Under Secretaries in either New South Wales or Victoria. The Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department got an increase of £100 last year and another £100 this year, and if that was to continue it would be a very wrong thing, and he (Mr. Forsyth) would vote against such a thing continuing. Some few years ago, when Queensland was not as prosperous as she was to-day, it was understood that the highest salary an Under Secretary could get was £700. That applied to all the Under Secretaries except Mr. Brady, who was a professional man, and who got a little more. The salary for the position now was fixed at £800 a year, and those Under Secretaries who were receiving that salary would not get an increase for a number of years.

The PREMIER: Perhaps never.

Mr. FORSYTH: In any case for a considerable number of years there would be no increases to Under Secretaries, while the men under them would be getting increases all the time. Hon. members might as well argue that because a man got £20 this year, £20 next year, and £20 the following year, and the Under Secretary nothing at all, he was being very badly treated. That was a rotten argument. If he found the Government giving increases next year on the same basis, or anything like the same basis, he would be dead against it, because it would be unfair.

Mr. MAX: What guarantee have we for that?

Mr. FORSYTH: There was no guarantee at all. After all, if they paid a good salary they would get good loyal work. Hon. members opposite seemed to think that nobody looked after the interests of the working men except themselves. It was always, "Why don't you give the messenger boy who is getting 5s. a week an increase?" He would point out that during the last four years between £300,000 and £400,000 had been given to the public servants, 90 per cent. of which had gone to the lower grades.

Mr. COLLINS: How much would it amount to per head?

Mr. FORSYTH: He had never gone into the figures as to what it would amount to per head. He was going to vote against the amendment. One hon. member had mentioned Mr. Abell, who was entitled to more than a £10 rise. He had been in the service about thirty years, and his case ought to be taken into consideration by the Chief Secretary. A great many people thought there

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was less work in the departments in consequence of federation; but Queensland was a rapidly developing State, and the work in the departments was increasing all the time. In the Chief Secretary's Office there was extra work in connection with the Agent-General's Office; and the indents from the old country, amounting to hundreds of thousands a year, were all controlled by this office. Men competent to act in these matters could save the State thousands a year. Let them give a man a good wage, and they would get loyal service.

Mr. MULLAN: He was somewhat amused at the attitude of members opposite in opposing the amendment, and defending the action of the Government. As a matter of fact, the action of Ministers in placing these increases on the Estimates nearly brought about a political crisis. Nearly twenty of the Premier's supporters condemned him for it in caucus, and the way the Premier got out of the difficulty was by telling them they could elect a new Ministry, but they could not change the Estimates without demoralising and degrading the Government. In saying that, he challenged contradiction.

Mr. D. HUNTER: I contradict it now.

Mr. MULLAN: The hon. member would contradict anything.

Mr. D. HUNTER: I was there.

Mr. MULLAN: What he had said was substantially correct. In regard to the amendment, members had no feeling of hostility, and it was not a personal matter at all. Their contention was that the higher-paid men should not receive further increases until further consideration had been given to the lower-paid men. In fixing a salary, he thought regard should be given not so much to the individual as to the office. If the work in an office was worth only £500 a year, there was no reason why the officer should get £1,000 a year, no matter how good he was.

Mr. D. HUNTER (*Woolloongabba*): Last year he took up an attitude which he felt at the time he was justified in taking up, and objected to this large increase to the Under Secretary; and when he saw the proposal to give another increase of £100 this year, he did not feel altogether satisfied. A 3½ per cent. increase in two years did not seem altogether satisfactory, and he could find no precedent for it. But if that was objectionable to members opposite, why had they nothing to say during the late election against the Federal Labour members increasing their own salaries by 50 per cent. in one year? He wanted to be fair. He believed the Under Secretary in this department was entitled to be placed on the same footing as other Under Secretaries. Members opposite were not prepared to take up the attitude they took up last year, when the hon. member for Warrego wanted to strike out the whole of the increase. He then intimated that if it was moved, he would be prepared to vote for the reduction; but the vote was allowed to go on the voices. Last year they made an attack on the vote, but they did not fight it; and this year they were fighting it by moving a reduction of £1. The amendment was not an honest one.

It was a dragnet amendment, so [7 p.m.] that anyone who objected to the increases could vote for it. That was evidenced by the attitude of the hon. member for Clermont, who last year voted for the increase to the Under Secretary, and

on this occasion he was going to vote for the amendment. Did members opposite contend that £800 a year was too much, and was it to be understood that if the Labour party came into power they would not give such a big salary? He noticed from the *Commonwealth Gazette* of the 18th August that the Federal Government were calling for applications for the position, not of Under Secretary, but of chief accountant in one of the departments, at a salary of £750 a year. Consequently, it was not contended by members opposite that that salary should not be paid to the men at the top if the men at the bottom were in a good position. He had given the figures before, and showed that there was a great disparity. The hon. member for Burke said they should have a levelling-up system. What did a levelling-up system mean? It meant to raise the bottom men, and not increase the disparity between the salaries of the bottom men and those on top. The members opposite agreed that the lad porters did not get a fair wage, but in dealing with the Under Secretary's salary they did not say how much too large it was. The only difference between him and the Opposition was the difference between 33½ and 33, and they only proposed a reduction in the salary so as to hamper the Government, and that being so, he was not going to play their game for them. It was the natural feeling of every member that they would like to increase the wages of the men at the bottom.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And we are doing it.

Mr. D. HUNTER: The Under Chief Secretary was the most important Under Secretary in the service, as he had to undertake important correspondence with the other States, the Agent-General, and others at home which the other Under Secretaries did not have to attend to, and yet they received more than he did. He believed in a levelling-up process with the Under Secretaries; but, like the hon. member for Moreton, he hoped it would not be continued for some years.

Mr. LAND asked for some information about the two messengers who were down for £75 and £120. The junior messenger was born in 1891 and joined the service in 1908, and the other messenger was born in 1893 and joined the service in 1898. There were two typists down for £100 each, but he did not know if they were men or women. One was born in 1853 and the other in 1881. One joined the service in 1898 and the other in 1900.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! There is a lot of conversation going on all over the Chamber, which makes it difficult for the speaker to be heard. There are small caucuses being held all over the place. If members who wish to hold these meetings would go into one of the committee-rooms it would be for the convenience of members speaking in this Chamber.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAND: Did the Premier think those four people were getting a fair wage? He did not think they were. He would also like some information about the items under "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses," which amounted to £2,000 in 1909-10, and to £3,000 in 1910-11. If the Chief Secretary would give that information, he would not bother him any more.

[*Mr. Forsyth*

The PREMIER: This is the third day they had been dealing with these Estimates, and he had given the information before. In regard to messengers, D. L. Smith was away from the office now, and the man getting £75 was seventeen years of age, so that he was getting a good wage. The other messenger was getting £120, not by any means too high, but he was coming on. He had got an increase this year, and was likely to get a further advance in the course of a year. With regard to the two female typists, they received the highest salary paid by the Government to typists, and he thought £100 a year was a very good salary for a typist. Business men knew that such was the case. Some of the girl typists were very good officers, but some of them could do only typing. As everyone knew, the most useful typist was one who could take down matter from dictation, and then type it in proper form. If one had to write a letter first and then get it typed, that was not much advantage. Some few weeks ago, since the Estimates were framed, some of those young women sent word to him that they wanted an increase in salary, and the matter was brought before the Public Service Board, who decided that officers who could do both shorthand and typewriting, who could take down a letter from dictation and then type it in proper form, should get increases up to £110 and £120, but that those who could do typing only should be limited to £100. For the purpose of giving those girls in the service who did typing only an opportunity of proving that they possessed the qualifications for the higher salary it had been intimated to them that an examination would be held in December next to test their capability to write shorthand at the rate of 80 or 100 words a minute. Those who showed that they could do that would get an increase of £10 a year for a couple of years—until they rose to £120. With reference to the item of £3,000 for "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses," there was a growing demand on that vote. The department had charge of the Public Library, the Picture Gallery, and the expedition of Scottish farmers, and all expenses in connection with those matters would come out of that vote.

Mr. RYAN desired to reply to some remarks made by the Premier with reference to communications from the Agent-General in his capacity under section 11 of the Government Savings Bank (Securities) Act of 1895. The gist of the hon. gentleman's defence—

The PREMIER: I did not make any defence.

Mr. RYAN: The gist of the hon. gentleman's defence was that the report should not go to the President of the Council and the Speaker of the Assembly, as they were trustees in the matter, and the hon. gentleman allowed it to be inferred that they had full power to deal with the securities.

The PREMIER: I mentioned that the Treasurer was a trustee, too.

Mr. RYAN: Only when he (Mr. Ryan) interjected, "Is there not a third?" The Treasurer was the real and active trustee, who had power to deal with the securities, and was the man who required to be watched. Section 2 of the Savings Bank Act of 1870 provided—

The Government debentures and Treasury bills so purchased as aforesaid shall immediately after the purchase thereof absolutely vest in and become the property of the President of the Legislative Council the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Colonial Treasurer for the time being for the use

and benefit of the Government Savings Bank and after a change in the person holding any or either of such offices by death or otherwise shall vest in the successor to such person jointly with the persons holding the other of the said offices for the like use and benefit without any assignment or conveyance.

The latter part of the section was as follows:—Provided always that the same Government debentures and Treasury bills shall be deposited for safe keeping in such place under such regulations and in the charge of such officer or person as the Governor in Council shall direct.

He took it that the President and Speaker were there as what might be called bare trustees—simply as watchdogs. Section 5 indicated who had the power to dispose of the debentures. It said—

The Government debentures and Treasury bills so deposited as aforesaid shall not be sold or otherwise disposed of without the express authority of the Governor in writing accompanied by a certificate signed by the Under Secretary to the Colonial Treasury and countersigned by the Auditor-General certifying that the proceeds of the debentures or Treasury bills to be sold are absolutely required to meet payments lawfully chargeable on the moneys aforesaid.

Mr. HARDACRE: Can they be sold without the consent of the President and Speaker?

Mr. RYAN: According to section 5 all that was required was the authority of the Governor and a certificate from the Under Secretary to the Treasury and the Auditor-General. It seemed to him a strange thing that the Treasurer's colleague could have the report of the Agent-General sent to him, and that no report was to be made to the President and Speaker, who were really the watchdogs over the securities for Parliament. The position was that the reports were sent to the Premier practically to be dealt with by him, and that they were really going into the hands of the persons whose actions members should be in a position to scrutinise. Therefore, he inclined to the view of the matter taken by the President of the Council. He did not know what the Speaker thought of the matter.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker has been unwell, and has not been able to look into the matter.

Mr. RYAN: That was so. Having regard to what had taken place between the Treasurer and the Auditor-General over the University appropriation of £72,000, it was highly desirable that the House should see that none of its privileges or rights in these matters were curtailed. He felt more strongly on the question than he really cared to express. He felt that in that matter the Auditor-General had been misled.

Mr. BLAIR understood that a protest against increases in high salaries had been made in the form of a reduction in the salary of the Under Secretary moved by the deputy leader of the Opposition. He thought a protest of that kind should be made, and it would be exceedingly unbecoming if they did not endeavour, by making such a protest, to assist the lower-paid servants, who were entitled to consideration before increases were given to officers in affluent, comfortable circumstances. He understood that, when the Estimates first came out, showing large increases to officers already receiving big salaries, there was something more than perturbation in the ranks of the Government following; and he understood further that a caucus was held, when the voices of some hon. members, whose sense of justice was touched by the inequity of the Estimates, were raised in more or less vigorous protest against the increases being given to officers

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with large salaries. He understood that it was pointed out that, if there was any retrogression with regard to the Estimates, it would be a far worse blunder than if they bludgeoned the Estimates through; and he had no doubt that there would be a united front presented by members on the other side. He was not speaking in any grudging spirit with regard to the increases that appeared on the Estimates. What he did object to was the subterfuge that was raised to endeavour to justify those increases. An attempt was being made to persuade hon. members that the salaries of Under Secretaries should be fixed at £800—that that should be the standard salary for the office. That was a subterfuge to justify hon. members opposite in voting for the Estimates as they were. He did not dispute the wisdom of standardising the pay of public servants. He believed there should be a proper classification; but it should not begin at the top. It should begin with the lower-paid officers, some of whom were not getting enough to keep them in decency and comfort. He knew of messengers in some of the departments who were not getting enough to live on in decency, and who were not getting any increases, while other men were getting increases of £50 and £100, and some as much as £200 in the last two years. The thing cried aloud to heaven as a scandal, and he would be failing in his duty if he did not make a protest. Men should be paid something approximating a decent wage. He was very sorry that the protests which he understood had been made by followers of the Government did not bear better fruit. While high officials were being considered, it was a great mistake to leave out the Under Secretary of the Mines Department. In the Estimates, as he saw them, there was no increase for that gentleman, and he was one of the very best officers in the whole service.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Provision has been made to increase his salary to £800. It was an omission, but it was immediately corrected in the columns of the daily Press.

Mr. BLAIR was very glad to hear the hon. gentleman say so. He had not seen the correction. He had only seen the Estimates as they were submitted to them. With regard to the classification of public servants, he had always striven, when he had the opportunity, to see that the service was classified, and that, as far as possible, the individuals in the service received something commensurate with the work they were doing, and that each officer received something like a living wage. Until some general step was taken to classify the service, there would not be that satisfaction that should exist in a big body of public servants. He should say that a salary of £100 per annum would be little enough for a start. Talking about typewriters, the Government should not discriminate between those who were stenographers and typewriters and those who were only typewriters. The Government should not follow the example of business men, who very often paid their employees at the cheapest rate. The Government should set a standard, and get business men, either by legislation or by their influence, to approximate to that standard.

Hon. R. PHILP: Business men pay typewriters better than the Government do.

Mr. BLAIR was very glad to hear the hon. member say so, because he understood from the Premier that the contrary was the fact.

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Another thing he wished to mention on that vote was that the Government should create a Public Service Board that would deal with such questions as classification, promotion, increases, leave, and overtime in a proper and an expeditious way. He thought most hon. members were convinced that the present Public Service Board—where the Ministers constituted the board—was not a satisfactory one.

The PREMIER: Not for Ministers.

Mr. BLAIR: Certainly not for Ministers, and he thought the Premier believed it was not satisfactory for the public servants either. From what he remembered of the hon. gentleman, he believed he would be in favour of a different kind of board, and he would urge that a board should be created which would apply not only to the public service but to the railway service, and all round, and that there should be one board to deal with all those questions. There should be one system, and one appeal. Instead of having, as they had in the Police Force, some wretched system of granting £100 in the case of the death of a police officer, the whole Workers' Compensation Act should apply to all Government servants. There should be no exclusion of one branch, nor should there be any discrimination between different branches. He believed that it would come sooner or later, and the sooner it came the better it would be for the service, and the more contented the service would be. The railway service had its appeal board constituted under a special Act. The clerical branch of the service had its [7.30 p.m.] appeal board constituted of Ministers, but the police had practically no appeal at all, and it must very often put the Home Secretary in an anomalous position indeed, and one which he was perfectly certain he did not wish to hold, and which very often caused him a great deal of trouble. If such a system as he advocated were adopted, they would have a very contented service, more regularity in dealing with this question, and if they had a proper and distinct basis there would be an intelligible way of dealing with those questions applicable to each branch of the public service. He was very sorry indeed, on looking through the Estimates, to find that very many of the lower-paid officials were not getting a penny increase, while men already getting huge salaries were to get still more, and the thing was disgraceful.

The PREMIER: He did not want to curtail this discussion, but they were spending a great deal of time on the first vote, and the time would be very limited before they got to the end of the Estimates.

Mr. THEODORE: You will withdraw the Sessional Order if we have not enough time.

The PREMIER: Oh, no! Oh, no!

Mr. MURPHY: Don't get excited about it. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: A protest had been made by the leader of the Opposition, and most of the speakers on the other side, to the proposed increases to the Under Secretaries, but they had said they did not grudge £800 to a capable Under Secretary, and they would be very unwise if they did. The complaint was that the Government was "greasing the fat pig," as the hon. member for Leichhardt said—neglecting the poorer-paid man and giving all the increases to the Under Secretaries. He would protest against that just as much as any member of the Chamber; he would not

do it while he was a Minister, and he would not have it done if he could help it. He had tried to show the Committee before—and members had the figures in their hands, and ought to know without his saying it a second time—that they had not been greasing the fat pig. The secretary of the Public Service Board had put into the hands of members themselves the actual figures, and he would read them again for the benefit of hon. members. He had referred to the matter before, and had read the first table on page 10 of this report, Appendix B, dealing with those officers who were in the service on 1st January, 1904, and he showed that the enormous percentage of the increases given had gone to the lower-paid officers. He was then twitted with the fact that he was not taking into account the new officers that entered the service. Fortunately, the Secretary to the Public Service Board had given a table in which he brought together the officers who were in the service on 1st January, 1904, the salaries they were getting, and the date of appointment—not only the men who were in the service in 1904, but others who had been appointed since—and he showed what percentage of increase each class of salary had got.

Mr. RYAN: You are talking to your own party, I notice.

The PREMIER: As the hon. gentleman had pointed out, apparently he had talked to his own party already. (Laughter.)

Mr. HAMILTON: And they talked to you.

The PREMIER: As they were perfectly entitled to do.

Mr. HARDACRE: You didn't say that when we were behind you—you told us to cross the floor of the House. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: It was, perhaps, not necessary to say to those gentlemen when they were behind him that they ought to talk to him. They made him and everyone else very sick of being in front of them.

Mr. HARDACRE: You made us sick.

The PREMIER: He wanted to show from the secretary of the Public Service Board's figures the percentage increase on the average salaries that had taken place in those four years from January, 1904, and that included the officers who were in the service then, and the new officers who had come in since. The percentage increase on salaries from £600 to £800 a year had been 0.9 per cent.; on salaries of from £500 to £590, the average increase had been 5.8 per cent. He wanted members to notice how the percentages ran up as the salaries ran down. On salaries from £400 to £490, the percentage increase was 10.2 per cent.; on salaries from £300 to £390, the percentage increase was 18.6 per cent.; on salaries from £200 to £290, the percentage increase was 19.2 per cent.; on salaries from £100 to £190, the percentage increase was 41.7 per cent.; and on salaries under £100, the percentage increase was 85.3 per cent.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MULLAN: Those figures prove nothing.

The PREMIER: Those figures were not his own figures; he never saw them until they were in print.

Mr. RYAN: Who concocted those figures?

The PREMIER: The gentleman whose proper business it was to concoct such figures—the secretary of the Public Service Board, whose particular business was to know all the details of the officers of the public service, and he had all the details necessary in his hands. Could hon. gentlemen say, looking

at those figures, that the Government had neglected the lower-paid officers and overpaid the higher ones?

Mr. BLAIR: A charge like that could be true and consistent with those figures.

The PREMIER: It was very difficult to deal with members who said a thing was—

Mr. BLAIR: I did not say it was.

The PREMIER: When he was speaking on this matter before he said, "Show me any four years in the history of Queensland when the lower-paid men in the service got more regular or larger increases than they got the last four years."

Mr. HAMILTON: Has there been four years in Queensland when you were as well able to do it?

The PREMIER: He was simply wanting members to recognise the fact. Now, if these things were true—and he did not think it could be disputed—where was the ground on which they stood?

Mr. LESINA: Do you distribute the same amount of money amongst fewer public servants?

The PREMIER: There was a larger number of public servants. The figures he had read was the percentage increase on the average salaries. It would be a good thing if hon. members got the table for themselves. It was really true. Never before had so much attention been paid to the lower-paid members of the public service as had been paid during the last four years, and hon. members opposite knew that quite well.

Mr. McLLACHLAN: And still some of them are considerably underpaid.

Mr. BLAIR: Scandalously underpaid.

Mr. RYAN: The public servants will be able to see for themselves and form their own opinion.

The PREMIER: He was not troubling about the public servants. So far as that particular matter was concerned, the Government did not attend to the details, but took the advice of men who were really more competent than the Ministers, and it was evident that they believed it to be a good thing. That was the justification for the Government. He did not say that every man was getting as much as he would like to give, but some consideration ought to be paid to the honest judgment of Ministers, and unless there was some reason for thinking the Government were incompetent or careless or partial, it was a very serious thing to take the administration out of the hands of the Government. Everybody knew that quite well, and no Government would permit that to be done. He wished hon. members to understand that he was not treating this simply as a party matter. The Government were right in giving those increases.

Mr. BLAIR: The Premier had very fairly vouchsafed information to the Committee. A portion of that information was a table which had been prepared by a public official. During the course of the Premier's comments he (Mr. Blair) challenged the documents, and the Premier replied that it was an insinuation that the document was faked.

The PREMIER: No, no!

Mr. BLAIR apologised, but he understood that the Premier had inferred that.

The PREMIER: Yes; something like that.

Mr. BLAIR: It was "Tweedlededum and Tweedledee." He could assure the hon.

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gentleman that nothing was further from his mind. The charge of not paying sufficient salaries to the lower-paid officials of the service and the accuracy of the document were not inconsistent at all—they could stand together. It was simply a document prepared on the lower value, and, as the higher-paid men in the service were the fewer, an increase between the fewer of them would be a smaller ratio—the small average of 0.9, while as they came down the scale the more numerous were the officials.

The PREMIER: It is the increase on the average salary.

Mr. BLAIR: That was the hon. gentleman's contention. If it were examined with the specific instances pointed out on the Estimates, he was perfectly certain it would not be that. Figures proved anything, but they would not pay debts. They could get an accountant to so manipulate figures as to prove anything under the sun, but they would not prove a fact. When they had a case on the Estimates of individuals who were not being paid decent wages, all the figures in the world would not prove that those men were getting good wages and were being fairly treated.

The PREMIER: Surely you admit that while a man here and there in the service may not be getting sufficient wages, the tables prove that, generally speaking, they have been well treated.

Mr. BLAIR: He did not state that an isolated case here and there would disprove the general accuracy of the table framed on the whole service, but he did say that a scale of that kind was misleading, because a paltry increase of £10 here and there in the lower branch of the service gave a better average than £50 to a highly-paid servant. That was why he stated that a table like that might be absolutely correct, and yet not inconsistent with the charge that the lower-paid servants were not fairly treated.

Question—That £6,724 only (*Mr. Lennon's amendment*, to reduce the vote by £1) be granted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Land
„ Barber	„ Lennon
„ Blair	„ Lesina
„ Breslin	„ May
„ Collins	„ Mullan
„ Crawford	„ Murphy
„ Ferricks	„ McLachlan
„ Foley	„ Payne
„ Hamilton	„ Ryan
„ Hardacre	„ Theodore
„ Hunter. J. M.	

Tellers: Mr. Barber and Mr. Foley.

NOES, 32.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
„ Appel	„ Hunter, D.
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Kidston
„ Booker	„ Mackintosh
„ Bothard	„ Paet
„ Brennan	„ Petrie
„ Bridges	„ Philp
„ Corser	„ Rankin
„ Cottell	„ Roberts
„ Cribb	„ Somerset
„ Denham	„ Stodart
„ Forrest	„ Swayne
„ Forsyth	„ Thorn
„ Fox	„ Walker
„ Gunn	„ White
„ Hawthorn	„ Wienholt

Tellers: Mr. Swayne and Mr. Wienholt.

Resolved in the negative.

[*Mr. Blair.*

Original question stated.

Mr. HAMILTON wished to refer to the method of appointing justices of the peace, and to show how difficult it was for members representing outside districts, in comparison with members representing metropolitan electorates, to get men appointed. Last year he went out to the Duchess and found there was not a justice of the peace in the district. The people there asked him to recommend a couple of gentlemen—one, the manager of Mount Mope, and the other the manager of the Duchess Mine. He did so, and they were appointed. One of them died, and the other went away, and then there was no justice of the peace in the district. He might say it was rather difficult to get suitable men to act. He received several letters on the subject; and as the hon. member for Flinders was going out there, he asked that hon. member to interview the people there. The hon. member did so, and they gave him the names of a couple of gentlemen—perfect strangers to him (*Mr. Hamilton*)—who were recommended. He sent in the recommendation to the Chief Secretary's Office, and on inquiry he found that the appointments were not made. The constable stationed at Urundangie told him that at times people went there and painted the town red, but it would be nonsense for him to run them in as he could not get a bench. There was great difficulty in getting justices of the peace there. A gentleman might be appointed manager of a station, and he might be appointed a justice of the peace, but station managers were frequently changed, and the place was left without a justice of the peace. It was only fair that some system of appointment should be adopted. He did not want to recommend people for appointment—he did not know that there was any particular kudos to be got from it; but when the member for a district recommended fit and proper persons as justices of the peace they should be appointed. Some justices of the peace had to go from 40 to 60 miles to Urundangie and 40 miles to Carandotta—which meant a lot of expense and inconvenience—in carrying out their duties. About Brisbane any hanger-on of the Government was created a justice of the peace, and they were as thick as ants on an anthill. He would like to know why the appointment of the gentlemen he recommended was refused.

Mr. MAY corroborated what the hon. member for Gregory had stated. During his time in Parliament he had re-

[8 p.m.] commended several gentlemen for appointment as justices of the peace at one time or another, and occasionally one was appointed. In the case referred to by the hon. member for Gregory, he went to the district referred to, and he went to have a look at the country between the Duchess and Malbon. There was no justice of the peace in the district, and he got the names of two reputable people, whom he recommended for appointment. He also recommended other people in the outlying districts as justices of the peace. He recommended the itinerant teachers as justices of the peace and received a favourable reply from the Premier. One he met at the Duchess travelled in the Gregory and Flinders electorates, but he had not yet been placed on the commission of the peace. If he were appointed a justice of the peace, he would be of great service on the mining fields in witnessing transfers and other documents, and would be of inestim-

able value to the whole of the community. It looked as if recommendations made for the position of justice of the peace were of no earthly good. He would like to have some information about the items under "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses." It was £2,000 last year and £3,000 for the current year, and he believed it ran into nearly £3,000 last year. Would the Premier give them a few items which made up the amount?

Hon. R. PHILP: The banquet you are going to is included in it.

Mr. MAY: He was going to that banquet, and he intended to go to every one of them. (Laughter.) But why not say that so much was spent for banquets? They did not have £3,000 worth of banquets. The people in the country always asked them for information about these matters.

The PREMIER: In reply to the hon. members for Gregory and Flinders, he could tell them that the Government had to take the responsibility of appointing anyone to the commission of the peace. While it was desirable, and also fit and proper, that the member for the district should nominate, the fact that a member nominated did not imply that the Government would put them on the commission of the peace, although the presumption was that they would. There was a suspicion that some of them were political appointments, although he himself never nominated a justice of the peace as a political appointment.

Mr. MAY: I can assure you that one of these men is an opponent of the Labour cause.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, why should he be a justice of the peace? (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: He was not concerned whether they were opponents or friends of the Labour cause. That had nothing at all to do with putting them on the commission of the peace. At one time a justice of the peace had considerable power in electoral matters, but that time had gone, and they were of little consequence in electoral matters now. Since he had been Premier he had not put men on for political appointments, and did not intend to do so. When a member nominated a man for the position of justice of the peace, the Government made all inquiries, and, if they considered him suitable for appointment, they put him on. The hon. member for Gregory mentioned two at the Duchess Mine. The Government appointed one of them, and he wrote back saying that he did not wish to be on the commission. That was rather disconcerting. The mere fact that a member nominated anyone to be a justice of the peace did not guarantee that he would be appointed, as if he was not suitable for the position he would not be appointed. The man nominated would be considered on his merits. Whether a member nominated seven or twenty-seven, he would just get the same number at the quarterly or half-yearly revision. If he nominated a large number they would be cut down.

Mr. MAY: Will he get a percentage?

The PREMIER: No; he would not. (Laughter.) By far the simplest way when a member nominated persons for the commission of the peace was to come and see the Under Secretary or himself as to why they were not appointed.

Mr. MAY: But you are so hard to get at.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had been getting at him all day. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAY: I mean in your private office, not here.

The PREMIER: If members had any nominations to make, it was best to nominate two or three and they would be considered on their merits.

Mr. MAY: He knew the mode of appointment of justices. When a name was sent in it was submitted to the chief Government officers and police of the district, and that meant if they had a slight bias against a certain man then he would not be appointed. He would not recommend any man for the position unless he knew he was straightforward and worthy of holding the position. There was a good deal of bias shown sometimes by officers who reported on persons nominated for appointment to the commission of the peace, and, if a man happened to be at variance with the powers that be, he had not much chance of being placed on the commission. Would the Premier be good enough to answer his second question, and give a synopsis of the items coming under the heading of "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses"?

The PREMIER: That has been done twice already.

Mr. LESINA: From what the Premier had said with reference to the commission of the peace, it appeared necessary that they should adopt some new method for the appointment of justices. Every member who had a constituency to nurse attempted to get it studded all over with justices of the peace, in order that they might become political agitators on his behalf. He had been a member of the House for twelve years, and had recommended only two persons for appointment to the commission of the peace. The system of justices was a curse, and had outgrown its usefulness. No doubt there were some good justices of the peace, but the majority of them were useless cumberers of the earth, and should be removed. In Brisbane, justices used to pack the bench, and make the granting of justice a thing of trade and barter, and it had been found necessary to wipe them off the bench in the city and confine the work to the paid magistrates. There were some members of the Labour party who were constantly hanging round the Chief Secretary's Office and wearing out the mat, trying to get some of their political pals on the commission of the peace. This traffic in the appointment of men who had to administer justice was a scandal and disgrace, and was only fit for a barbaric nation. Men should not be appointed to that position for political purposes, and a politician should not be appointed at any price. He hoped the Government would revise the list, and cut it down by about 5,000.

Question put and passed.

AGENT-GENERAL FOR THE STATE.

The PREMIER moved that £13,374 be granted for the "Agent-General for the State." There was a small increase of £400 in this vote, made up of a large number of increases in salaries. During the past few years the Government had been increasing the cost of the Agent-General's Office, and also, he thought, increasing its efficiency. Not only had they established the office in a better position, but the staff had been reorganised, and fresh blood had been sent from Queens-

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land to the office. Mr. J. M. Campbell, who acted at the exhibition as director of the Queensland court, and who did exceedingly good work there, became acting secretary on the death of the late secretary to the Agent-General. The Government afterwards sent Mr. P. J. Dillon home to act as secretary and chief clerk to the Agent-General, and Mr. Campbell was appointed to the travelling bureau to go through the country districts.

Mr. LESINA: Is he director of the travelling bureau?

The PREMIER: Mr. Campbell was the controller of the bureau. Other young men had also been sent home to the Agent-General's Office. When he was at home two years ago there were no Queenslanders in the office. The Government thought that undesirable, and that the office staff should be constantly recruited by Queenslanders who had some pride in Queensland, and who would work for Queensland in the old country. He found when he went home to the exhibition the most creditable spirit of loyalty and patriotism among the Queenslanders who had been sent there to represent the State at the exhibition. He did not know that colonials were so patriotic until he saw them in another country. They worked like Trojans at the exhibition night and day, and created an excellent impression owing to the patriotic feeling they showed for Queensland. Instead of having all Britishers in the office, it had been decided to recruit it with men from the State. Large increases had been given to the staff. Mr. Dillon got £450; the clerk and accountant, Mr. Elliott, got an increase of £20; Mr. Hutcheon got an increase of £10; Mr. Lenton got £110—he was previously paid from contingencies; Mr. Legg got £40—he also had been paid from contingencies. Mr. Campbell had been receiving £425 as acting secretary to the Agent-General, and he retained that salary and had a travelling allowance as well, so that he was the best paid man in the office. Mr. Tearoe, the engineer, got an increase of £50. There was also a rearrangement of the salary of the inspector, who was previously paid from contingencies. The total increases in salaries came to £402; and, if he understood the position correctly, the expenditure was likely to increase rather than decrease. They had an exceedingly attractive Agency-General, and an exceedingly efficiently conducted office. It was better that they should have an efficient staff, even if it cost more money to get the work done, because he thought there would be a very considerable increase in the work to be done in connection with immigration.

Mr. HAMILTON: Is the Agent-General appointed for a term of years?

The PREMIER: He was not appointed for any term. He simply held the office.

Mr. HAMILTON: He is keeping the seat warm. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: Hon. members had been going on with the cry about keeping the seat warm for some years. He (Mr. Kidston) was said to be going to London a good many years back, and he thought it was better to let them continue to have that cry. (Laughter.)

Mr. LESINA: The expenditure appeared to be growing in this office, and he protested against that, in pursuance of the policy he had laid down for himself as an advocate of

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economy in State administration, particularly in connection with departments which might very well be curtailed in consequence of the advent of federation. The time was ripe for some curtailment in the expenditure in connection with this office. Two or three of the Australian States had already cut down the expenditure on their Agencies-General. The people understood that, when a High Commissioner for Australia was appointed, all the States would require in London would be a resident trade commissioner, acting under the High Commissioner. Although, according to the Agent-General's report, there was a great deal of valuable work done in the office, he did not know that it had increased. Yet the expenditure was growing out of all bounds. He did not know exactly in what directions it might be cut down, but it certainly should be reduced. The new premises in the Strand entailed an expenditure last year of £5,709; rent, repairs, etc., were responsible for £3,617, and incidental expenses for £1,708. The total ran up to £9,000 or £10,000; and the vote now under consideration amounted to another £13,374 as against £12,972 last year. No doubt the Government maintained the office to retain the standing of Queensland as a Sovereign State; but in view of the advent of federation, it was absurd to retain six separate Agencies-General in addition to the larger Commonwealth office, each with a retinue of attendants. It was absurd to expect the taxpayers of Australia to keep up

[8.30 p.m.] six separate State Parliaments, six puppet Governors with their six little retinues of attendants, and also to have these six little State Agencies-General revolving around the central Commonwealth Commissioner. Throughout Australia there was a clamant demand for a cutting down of expenditure on such things. There were hundreds of thousands of young Australians growing up, and those were the topics that were engaging their minds. Members of Parliament were becoming fossilised, and did not know what the people were thinking; but the growing youth of Australia would demand that the States should lose their sovereignty, and that institutions like the Agencies-General should be pared down almost to vanishing point, as one commissioner was sufficient for all Australia. Old members like the hon. member for Townsville clung desperately to the old tradition regarding the sovereign powers of the States; but he (Mr. Lesina) was in favour of home rule for Australia and not for little pieces of Australia. We were all one people, and why should we fight amongst ourselves about the retention of these semblances—this mere simulacrum of a departed—the glory of which had gone the moment federation had been achieved? He would like to see the Government cut down the expenditure.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: You are shaping your course now all right.

The PREMIER said that several times during the present session there had been some talk on the other side about abolishing the Agent-General's Office.

Mr. LESINA: It was talked about before federation came.

The PREMIER: The office contributed to the dignity of the State, and he thought that was quite a good reason in itself, but it was by no means the real reason for seeking to retain the Agent-General's Office there.

The Agent-General's Office was a business advantage to Queensland, and Queensland would be penny wise and pound foolish if she permitted her London business, her immigration business, and her indent business to be taken over by some person—they could call him commissioner or what they liked—if they had no control over him, and no man who knew anything at all about the way to carry on a large business of that kind would suggest it was a good thing to do. It was not the High Commissioner for the Commonwealth who was the important officer; it was the Agents-General for the States who were the most important in a business sense. Whatever status, as a political officer, the High Commissioner might have, he had no particular status as a business agent. The increasing work to be done in connection with immigration and the indent work amply justified our expenditure, and would justify us in greatly increasing our expenditure. He would much rather ask the House to make a permanent fixture of the Agent-General's Office than see any suggestion for abolishing it, or even decreasing the expenditure upon it, for all the expenditure incurred was necessary. The hon. senior member for Brisbane South was there a few weeks ago, and said that he thought that Queensland, for the money she was spending, had the best Agency-General in London.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Doing the best work, too.

The PREMIER: He might compare the change which had taken place in the last two years, in connection with the location of the office, with the change from an upstairs office in Ann street to a big office in Queen street. That was the change which had taken place in return for the extra money which had been spent.

Mr. FERRICKS: That is pretty rough on the last Agent-General.

The PREMIER: No; it did not trouble the last Agent-General at all. There had been a necessity on the part of both this Government and the last Government to keep down the office to the vote, and cut down the Agent-General's salary from £1,500 to £1,250, but he thought it ought to be raised to £1,500 again. The Agent-General's Office was advantageous to the State from a purely business point of view.

Mr. ALLAN (*Brisbane South*): He rose with a good deal of pleasure to bear testimony to the impression he had gained of the work done by the Agent-General in London, and he was rather surprised to hear the hon. member for Clermont enunciate the narrow views he had done on this important question. He could assure the hon. member that if he were to see something of what he (Mr. Allan) had seen recently—

Mr. FORSYTH: We will send him home.

Mr. ALLAN: If they sent the hon. member home, he would come back with enthusiasm, and, instead of cutting down, he would double the expenditure. As far as cutting down the vote was concerned, he would ask hon. members to bear in mind that Queensland could not be compared with the other States. It was one of the grandest States of the Commonwealth, and had an area greater than federated South Africa. It had less than 5 per cent. of its lands alienated, as against nearly the whole of the

lands in Victoria, and half in New South Wales, and we had scope to maintain a live Agent-General that no other State had, and it would be utter madness for us to abolish or cut down the work being done through our Agent-General. Compared with what Canada had done in advertising and making the State public, we were doing a mere trifle.

Mr. COLLINS: Canada is equal to the Commonwealth.

Mr. ALLAN: He had seen something of the results which Canada was getting for the advertising and other means she had taken for bringing herself before the public. He thought the time would very soon come when our Agent-General's Office in London would not only be increased but more than doubled. In doing that, we would have to prepare the way at this end. As to expense, if hon. members would look at some of the statistics regarding the moneys immigrants brought out with them, the money that was circulated here benefited the State in many ways—not only the money brought out by immigrants but indirectly by the travellers who were coming to the State—by men of independent means, whose attention had been drawn to Queensland through our agency in London, they would soon give up carping that all this money was spent for nothing. We were getting more for the State through the Agent-General's Office than we paid away. He could bear testimony to the splendid work being done by Sir Thomas Robinson, who was a good business man of great experience, and one who was inclined to go out of his way to give information and to assist those who called upon him. He had also met Mr. Campbell, who worked late and early, and he hoped that when the time came for him to return to Queensland he would get a good position in the public service here. He hoped that, while we sent our good men away to the outposts in London, we would not forget those here. He was sorry the vote was not larger, and he hoped that before long the amount would be double what it was now.

Mr. LESINA entirely concurred with all the hon. member for South Brisbane had said respecting the work done by this office, and also the officers employed there, and the extensive commercial knowledge and experience and unfailing courtesy of Sir Thomas Robinson. Those facts were beyond dispute, and he did not desire to dispute them, because it did not serve his cause. He would point out that the promise was made on the establishment of federation that the gubernatorial and Agent-General establishments would be abolished, and none of those things had been realised, and the taxpayers had now to pay for a High Commissioner of the Commonwealth and for two other Houses of Parliament in addition, and the younger generation were asking why those economies had not been effected. He quite understood that men like the hon. member for Townsville, who had grown up identified with the commercial life of the State and all its institutions, naturally enough would never agree to such a radical departure as the abolition of the Agent-General and gubernatorial establishments. However, they could be done without, and it was the duty of the Government to attempt to do without them. The work had to be done, but it could be done with one central Commonwealth office in

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London, and let each State have a subdepartment controlled by a trade commissioner. The work could be better done and done more cheaply than by the present system of having an Agent-General here for New South Wales, another there for Victoria, and another somewhere else for South Australia, and another somewhere else for Queensland. One was better off than the other, had better offices, and they were rivalling one another in trying to get immigrants. He would like to see a coherent united Australian policy in connection with the matter. That had been adopted in regard to Canada, and it would suit the genius of the Australian people better than it suited the Canadians. He did not say they should wipe it out root and branch all at once, but it was impossible to cut down that office without injuring its efficiency until such time as arrangements were made to put all those offices under the Commonwealth.

HON. R. PHILP: A good many things said in regard to federation had not come to pass. It was said that the cost of federation would not be more than 4s. per head, and now it cost Queensland £1 8s. per head. He voted for federation, while the hon. member for Clermont was against federation. Now the hon. member turned round and was a unificationist. What would he be in another five years? The hon. member talked about the great Australian feeling. It was a strange thing that that Australian feeling had not grown in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, or even in Tasmania—they all had Agents-General. He was very pleased when Sir George Reid was appointed to the High Commissionership, as he was doing splendid work. He did not think any man in Australia could do the work Sir George Reid was doing, but the more work Sir George Reid did for Australia, the more work would the Agent-General for Queensland get. The Agent-General was in charge of all the immigration, which was growing, and he (Mr. Philp) was very glad to see it growing. The Agent-General also had to buy all the material required for the railways and the whole of the Government supplies. Last year something like £3,000,000 passed through the Queensland Agent-General's hands, and they wanted some responsible man to look after all that expenditure. Even in the very worst times in Queensland it was necessary to have an Agent-General, and now three or four times the work was being done, which necessitated three or four times the expenditure. He did not think it was possible for any one man in London to represent the whole of Australia in her immigration requirements. Sir George Reid was now doing as much as anyone in his position could do—he was keeping Australia before the public of Great Britain.

MR. BRESLIN: He keeps his belly filled.

HON. R. PHILP: No matter how the hon. member for Port Curtis lived he would never be held in the same respect as Sir George Reid, and the remark of the hon. member was totally uncalled for. Sir George was a politician and had enemies and friends on both sides, but the opinion was held, not only amongst his political friends but also amongst his political foes, that he was doing a splendid work for Australia. He (Mr. Philp) did not think the Agent-General was getting sufficient salary, and he might tell hon. members he was not a candidate for the position. At one time

Sir Horace Tozer got £1,500 a year, but his expenses were very heavy. When Sir Horace Tozer left Queensland he had some little means of his own, but every shilling had been spent in carrying out his duties. The present Agent-General had money of his own and the salary was no object to him, but the position was worth more than £1,250 a year. It was a good idea to send young Queenslanders home, and they should be sent home more frequently, so as to give the latest information about the State. Mr. Campbell went home some three or four years ago.

MR. COLLINS: Would that argument about sending people home from here not apply to the Agent-General?

HON. R. PHILP: That applied too, but it was very hard to get men to go home as Agent-General.

THE PREMIER: The present Agent-General knows as much about Queensland as anybody in the community. He lived a long time in Queensland.

MR. BRESLIN: He got his title out of it.

THE PREMIER: And he deserved it, too.

HON. R. PHILP: He noticed the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth was going home for the coronation, and had invited eighteen members of the Federal Parliament to go too—eleven from one side and seven from the other. It would be a very good plan for the Premier of Queensland to invite some members of the Legislative Assembly to go home next year—he would not say anything like eighteen should go. It would be a good thing if members occasionally went home and addressed a few meetings and spoke of Queensland as they knew it. Some of the best lecturers that could be got might be found in that Assembly; and, if only half a dozen were to go to the old country, Queensland could well afford to pay their expenses. Mr. Fisher had asked eleven from his own side and seven from the other side; and some members of the Federal Parliament were going at their own expense. This State was not going to be eaten up by the Commonwealth. The work of the Commonwealth and that of the States was clearly defined in the Constitution, and one need not interfere with the other, but work in harmony. There would always be necessity for someone in London to look after the interests of this State; and he would like the Premier to think well over his suggestion of sending half a dozen members to the coronation next year, and getting them to travel about and say something about the country they came from.

MR. J. M. HUNTER recognised that it was absolutely necessary for a State like Queensland, doing a large business, to have an officer of this sort at home—quite as necessary as it was for merchants here to have their representatives at home. He agreed with the hon. member for Townsville that they should work in harmony with the other States; and he felt so strongly on that point that he would like to see the offices of the Commonwealth and the States all in the same building. It would be a splendid advertisement, not only for the States but for the Commonwealth. He was not a unificationist. He thought as time went on there would be increasing items of business both for the Commonwealth and for the States. He did not wish to see the vote increased; at the same

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time he recognised that it was absolutely necessary, from a business point of view, to have a representative in London.

Mr. BRESLIN rose to a point of order. He wished to know what "at home" meant.

Mr. FORSYTH: As members of Parliament, he supposed they considered they were at home now. During the last twenty-four or thirty hours this building had been their home to a very large extent. If hon. members would study the Estimates as they should do they would find that, instead of there being an increase in this vote, it was really a decrease of something like £5,000. The sum of £18,000 was spent last year, and this year they were asked to vote £13,000, so it was evident that the Government were reducing expenditure.

Mr. LESINA: The vote was £12,000 last year and they spent £18,000. This year they ask for £13,000 and they may spend £20,000.

Mr. FORSYTH: They were not likely to spend as much this year. Last year the sum of £10,000 was spent on rent, [9 p.m.] printing, stationery, etc.; and only £4,000 was required under that heading this year. This, with the advertising and contingency expenses of £2,000, made it up to £5,000.

Mr. LESINA: The contingent expenses did not come to that. You are wrong there.

Mr. FORSYTH: He happened to be at home two years ago, when the Franco-British Exhibition was on, and he must supplement the statement made by the Premier with regard to the magnificent work done by the whole of the officials sent from Queensland at that Exhibition. (Hear, hear!) Not only was the Queensland Exhibition by far the best of all the States but it was carried out by the Queenslanders themselves at a much less expense than the courts of the other States, and Canada. New South Wales and Canada spent huge sums of money in fitting out their courts at the Exhibition—thousands of pounds more than Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Perfectly true.

Mr. FORSYTH: The men attached to the Queensland court were not only splendid men for the position but they were loyal to Queensland. Mr. Campbell was a host in himself, and put his whole heart and soul into the business. He was at the exhibition at 8 o'clock in the morning, and was to be found there until 11 o'clock at night. Even on Saturday nights he was there up till 11 o'clock at night. So far as the attractiveness of the Queensland court was concerned, and the crowds going there, it was far and away ahead of any other exhibition. It was crowded day and night, and the officials were kept busy throughout in distributing literature about Queensland and giving information about Queensland's immigration policy. It was an attractive court, and the officials did their work well.

The PREMIER: One of the best things about it was that they were all young Queenslanders there.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes; and they carried out their work well. It would not be wise to abolish the office of Agent-General. They could call him Trade Commissioner or whatever they liked, but they must have someone in charge there to direct the work.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: We will want to do more work there.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes; they would have to do more work there. Especially in connection with their immigration policy they would have more work to do. They would also have a good many loans to arrange for in the next few years, and they wanted a man there who was thoroughly competent in the financial business, so as to help the Government in connection with the refloating of the big loans which were falling due and floating other loans.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: And to find a market for our produce.

Mr. FORSYTH: They wanted a man who was well acquainted with the financial market, so as to know when was the best opportunity to put the loans on the market. As the senior member for Townsville mentioned, £3,000,000 went through the Agent-General's hands last year, so that they wanted not only a competent man but a straightforward, honourable man. If they had a man who thoroughly understood his business, he would save his salary ten times over in the flotation of a loan. And if they wanted a good man they must pay him a good salary.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Maranoa suggested that the offices of the Agents-General and the Commonwealth should be all in the one building, but he thought it would be better for Queensland to be in a single building, as the other method would only lead to confusion.

Mr. LESINA: The Commonwealth office should be pre-eminent.

The PREMIER: He did not think so. The Canadian States had offices of their own. He entirely agreed that the Australian States and the Commonwealth should work together in the old country, just as they ought to do in Australia, in the interests of each other.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: You are doing that with the Scottish Agricultural Commission.

The PREMIER: That was desirable. As a matter of fact, the States' Agents-General now worked together and had regular meetings every fortnight or every month, and the Agents-General worked harmoniously with Sir George Reid. If they had one general office, there was some danger of confusion. The chief work for many years would be in connection with immigration, and there was a rivalry among the States. It might be a friendly rivalry, so long as they were not too close together. It was just like people who quarrelled when they lived together, but were friendly when they were a little distance away from each other. Members must not look on the money spent on the Agent-General's Office in London as a waste of money. Even if it were increased it would not necessarily be a bad thing. Excellent work could be done for Queensland even if the expense of the office grew above what it was. Just as the work grew they would be justified in sending more men from Queensland to attend to it. In reply to the question of the hon. member for Port Curtis, as to where "at home" was, he could say that he had lived in Queensland for a quarter of a century, and when he thought of home his mind distinctly turned to the old place in Scotland. But when he went to Falkirk a few years ago his mind had to turn back to Queensland, as he knew that that was where "at home" was, as that was where his heart was.

Mr. BRESLIN: I am very pleased to hear it.

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Mr. COLLINS: He noticed the expenses in connection with the Agent-General's Office were steadily increasing. The senior member for South Brisbane compared Canada with Queensland, but Queensland was only a State of the Commonwealth, while Canada was a country with 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 people.

The PREMIER: How did Canada get them?

Mr. COLLINS: He was pleased to hear the hon. member for Moreton speak so complimentary about the Queensland native born and the work they did in England. The argument showed that they should give more encouragement to the native born, instead of bringing out so many of the British born. The Australian born, according to the testimony of the Premier and the hon. member for Moreton, was superior in every way to the average Englishman, Irishman, and Scotchman. The aim of the human race was to breed men of a superior kind, and apparently we were able to do that in Queensland.

The PREMIER: If we are raising a superior race here, is it not desirable that we should get more stock to raise more of that superior race?

Mr. COLLINS: He would not pursue that subject any further, but he should like to know whether advertisements in the old country always told the truth about the State?

The PREMIER: Always.

Mr. COLLINS: The sum of £5,000 for advertising and contingent expenses seemed a very large amount for that purpose, considering that the total vote for immigration was £50,000.

Mr. LENNON: He had heard the present Agent-General spoken of in the very highest terms, and he believed the gentleman was all that he was painted to be. The only thing he had to say against him was that he had been too long out of Queensland. The Agent-General was, he knew, a man of great mercantile and shipping experience in Queensland, but he had been away from the State fifteen or sixteen years. While admitting that he was a first-class man, who could be relied upon to do his best for Queensland, he (Mr. Lennon) maintained that the Agent-General for the State should be a man who was more up to date, and who had more recent knowledge of the aspirations and requirements of the people than was possessed by the present occupant of the office. While agreeing with most that had been said by the hon. member for Clermont as to the work that should be done by the Agent-General's Office, he was not, like the hon. member, a unificationist. He was a great believer in the federal spirit, but did not think it would be good for the State of Queensland, or, indeed, for any State, to go in *holus-bolus* for unification. He admitted that as time went on many matters would, of necessity, pass away from the control of the respective States to the general control of the Commonwealth; but still we should retain our distinct interests as States, and have at the same time esteem for and confidence in the Federal Government. He noticed that a very large amount of money was expended by the Agent-General in London. Included in that was a sum of £226,579 for indents for the Railway Department. He should like to see that expenditure decreasing. He was looking forward to the time when we should not

want to order so much material from the old land, but would make all our steel rails and locomotives in Queensland. There was one item of expenditure he should like to have some information about, and that was the sum of £1,000 granted for the relief of sufferers in the Messina earthquake. Was that disbursed by the Agent-General on his own responsibility?

The PREMIER: No; we wired it to London.

Mr. LENNON: He was glad to hear that, and wished it to be understood that he was not objecting to the expenditure, as it was for the relief of sufferers from a national calamity. He noticed also a sum of £5,709 11s. 5d. for "New premises in Strand." He presumed those were the premises called the "Marble Hall." While he agreed that the Agent-General and his staff should be decently housed, he thought they should be careful not to enlarge that expenditure too freely. Then there was an item of £3,017 13s. 2d. for "Rent, repairs, etc." This expenditure was on a liberal scale, but as he understood that it would not be recurring expenditure, he did not want to condemn it too much. At the same time he would impress upon the Premier, who administered this department, that he should not think that because things were prosperous there was to be no limit to the expenditure.

The PREMIER: We only spend money when we need to spend it, and can get service for it.

Mr. LENNON: Even that explanation was not completely satisfactory; the expenditure should not be regarded as a thing which could go on without limit, but should be carefully controlled. The salary of Mr Campbell, director of the travelling bureau, was fixed at £425. He presumed that was exclusive of travelling expenses.

The PREMIER: Yes; travelling expenses are additional.

Mr. LENNON thought that officer was very well paid, if he moved about a great deal and did not stay in London.

The PREMIER: He does not work in London at all.

Mr. LENNON: He hoped that he had a roving commission, and that he would not succumb to the luxury and allurements of London, but that he would devote his energies to furthering the interests of Queensland throughout the United Kingdom. He (Mr. Lennon) had thought of moving a reduction in the vote for "Advertising and Contingent Expenses in promoting Emigration to the State," but, as it was proposed to deal with immigration on the general vote for that purpose, he would pass this smaller vote without further comment. The relations between the various State Agents-General might be more harmonious than they had been in years gone by, and, possibly, as the Premier said, they were now more harmonious; but they could all remember the advertisements that were inserted in the Press in the old country by the different Agents-General, and how each extolled his own State, always at the expense of the other States. There used to be altogether too much self-glorification and too much depreciation of their neighbours.

The PREMIER: And it hurt them all.

Mr. LENNON: The spirit that used to prevail impelled him to adopt the ideas of the hon. member for Clermont, and feel, as he

[*Mr. Collins.*]

had for many years, that one concentrated effort, under the roof of the High Commissioner, would be a much better way of representing the needs of all Australia than by having separate State agencies. Of course, there should be sub-departments for each State. That view, however, did not seem to be shared by hon. members opposite, so that they might have to continue for a time on the present lines. He hoped more care would be taken in the selection of immigrants from the old country. They had not yet arrived at anything approaching a satisfactory method of dealing with immigration. Too many of the people who were coming from the old country were settling down in Brisbane. The number was out of all proportion to the needs of the State. Brisbane was the capital and the chief port of the State, but they wanted the people to spread along the coast line to a much larger extent than they were now doing.

Mr. HAMILTON: The Premier had stated that the Franco-British Exhibition was a great success. Well, he had been told that the exhibits of fruit were merely casts, and that they made a very poor showing compared with the exhibits of genuine fruit from other places.

The PREMIER: We had some casts of fruit, but we also had actual plants growing there.

Mr. HAMILTON: He noticed an item of £2,194 for "Pensioners residing in Great Britain." Could the hon. gentleman give them any idea as to who those pensioners were? Were they old members of the public service who had gone to reside in Great Britain when they retired on their pensions?

The PREMIER: They are merely pensioners who have gone home to the old country for a year or two. We have no pensioners there.

Mr. PAYNE: The Agent-General in his report made the following remarks regarding opal:—

There is always a fair demand for opals, and there is every prospect of prices continuing good. It is better that the stones should come in matrix form, uncut. Exporters do not always cut opals to meet the ideas of the London buyers.

There were a good many men engaged in the opal industry some miles out of Longreach, and for some two years he had been trying to discover the best market for those men. He had one or two very fine specimens of opal, and he was prepared, in the interests of the industry, to give those specimens to the Premier to send them home. He understood that Queensland had the best opal and the best matrix in the world. It was a matter upon which it was well worth the Government spending a few pounds in opening up a market in the old country.

The PREMIER: They had got a first-class showroom in London; and, if people had regular lines of goods to sell in London, all they had to do was to send samples to the Agent-General—getting instructions sent on by the department here, of course—and the Agent-General would do everything possible to bring them into direct touch with buyers.

Mr. HAMILTON: Will the department forward goods to the Agent-General?

The PREMIER: Yes; at the expense of the owners, of course. In a matter like opal

he would be delighted to send a good sample, and every care would be taken of it.

Question put and passed.

AUDIT OFFICE.

The PREMIER moved that £8,410 be granted for "Audit Office." The amount asked for was £430 more than was voted last year, and it practically consisted of increases to the staff. He need hardly itemise the particular increases, although he was prepared to give hon. members the information if they wished to have it.

Mr. RYAN desired to say a few words on the item of £70,000 towards providing for a Queensland University. There [9.30 p.m.] was some correspondence in the Auditor-General's report, pages 3, 4, and 5. With the indulgence of the Committee, as he had no doubt hon. members had read it, he would ask that that correspondence be taken as read. There was a letter of 5th September, 1910, from the Auditor-General to the Treasurer; 6th September, 1910, from the Treasurer to the Auditor-General; and also 7th September, 1910, from the Auditor-General to the Treasurer.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the House that the correspondence be taken as read?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Audit Department, Queensland,
Brisbane, 5th September, 1910.

Sir,—I have the honour to invite your attention to the following item which has been included under the vote "Buildings," Department of Public Works, in the Treasury Statement of Expenditure for the month of June last:—

"TOWARDS PROVIDING FOR A QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY, ETC., £70,000."

As you are aware, parliamentary appropriation was obtained on the 1909-10 Estimates for an amount of £50,000 for this purpose, and, on the authority of an Executive minute dated the 2nd July last, the vote was supplemented by an additional £20,000. The total amount, £70,000, was withdrawn from the consolidated revenue fund on the 1st July, 1910, and placed to the credit of a Treasury trust account styled:—

"QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY AND CENTRAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE BUILDINGS FUND."

Section 18 of the Audit Act of 1874 prescribes that—"All votes which shall be appropriated to the public service for any year and which shall not be expended during such year or within the first three months of the following year shall lapse and shall not be issued or applied in any future year unless a contract or engagement shall have been made and entered into before the expiration of such year by which a liability so to issue or apply the same shall have been incurred."

It would, therefore, appear to me that this money has not been expended by the Treasury within the meaning of the Act, in so far that your department still retains full control over the amount in question, and could, by transfer or otherwise, apply the amount to some other purpose.

The drawing of a cheque upon one of the Treasurer's bank accounts and paying the same into another of his accounts—as has been done in the case under review—can hardly be termed, according to my personal judgment, an expenditure of public moneys. It is rather a reserve for future expenditure, and not made in accord with Audit Acts.

In view of the fact that the transfer was for such a very desirable purpose, I regret that I am constrained to take exception to the transaction in its

Mr. Ryan.]

present form, which precludes me from granting you a certificate of discharge for the month of June, 1910, as prescribed in the concluding part of section 33 of the Audit Act of 1874.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. W. CONNAH, Auditor-General.

The Honourable the Treasurer.

The Treasury,
Brisbane, 6th September, 1910.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, and, in reply, I beg to submit the following facts:—

Last year Parliament appropriated £50,000 towards the provision for a Queensland University and central technical college buildings. On 30th June the money had not been disbursed, and it was found that if the appropriation were allowed to lapse it would be impossible to provide so large a sum for that purpose from the revenue of 1910-1911.

The Audit Act of 1874, section 18, provides that all votes which shall not be expended during such year or within the first three months of the following year shall lapse. It also provides, in section 23, that the Treasurer shall make a statement at the close of the year, and, by section 2 of the Audit Act Amendment Act of 1895, he is to hand over the surplus, as shown by that statement, to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund.

In accordance with the latter provisions, I made a statement at the close of the year showing a surplus of £5,675 7s. 11d., and handed over that surplus to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund in accordance with the Audit Acts. But in that "statement" I showed that there had been paid into a trust fund for the Queensland University and central technical college buildings fund a sum of £70,000—that is, the £50,000 appropriated by Parliament, and a further £20,000 authorised by Executive minute, and for which parliamentary sanction will be sought in due course.

Now the question is raised whether I was carrying out the intentions of Parliament in paying this money into a trust fund, and also whether in so paying the money into a trust fund I "expended" it within the meaning of the Act, and therefore whether I am entitled to include such payment in "expenditure" for the year.

There is no doubt that when Parliament appropriated the £50,000 it knew that little, if any, of the money was likely to be actually disbursed before the end of the financial year. It is also clear that a similar sum could not be provided from this year's revenue, so that the only way to carry out the intentions of Parliament was to set aside in some way the sum Parliament had appropriated, so that it could only be used for the purpose for which Parliament had appropriated it. This has been done, and the money can now only be lawfully used for the purpose for which Parliament appropriated it, and is still as much under the supervision of the Auditor-General as if it were in the consolidated revenue fund.

There remains the legal or technical aspect of the matter—namely, whether, when the Treasurer paid this money into a trust fund, he "expended" it within the meaning of the Act.

This same question was raised before the Federal High Court in the case of the State of New South Wales v. the Commonwealth, reported at page 179 of vol. 7 of the Commonwealth Law Reports.

The Commonwealth Constitution provides that any portion of the one-fourth of the Customs revenue reserved for Commonwealth purposes which is not expended on 30th June shall be paid over to the States, just as our Audit Act provides that any surplus not expended shall be paid over to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund.

At the close of the year 1907-8 the Commonwealth Government paid into a trust fund for certain purposes approved by Parliament portion of the surplus revenue which otherwise would have been paid over

to the States, and the States claimed that placing such money to a trust fund was not "expenditure" within the meaning of the Constitution.

The present case is exactly on all-fours. In both cases the crux of the question is: "Can money so paid into a trust fund for specified purposes approved by Parliament be properly considered to be 'expended' and be properly included in the expenditure for the year?" The judges of the Federal High Court unanimously decided the question in the affirmative.

In delivering judgment, Griffith, C.J., said—

"The word 'expenditure' does not necessarily mean disbursement actually made, although that is its meaning in some contexts. But when it is used in a direction as to the mode of making up accounts for the purpose of striking a balance it may have a wider meaning."

* * * * *

"I have not thought it necessary to discuss at greater length the meaning of the word 'expenditure' as used in section 89, since, if that is its meaning in some contexts. But when it is used in a direction as to the mode of making up accounts for the purpose of striking a balance it may have a wider meaning."

Mr. Justice Barton said—

"As for the word 'expenditure,' which was the subject of much discussion, I quite agree that it primarily means the money paid out or the act of payment out, whether completed or not. But it also means money to be paid out, and it means money that is in course of being paid out."

Mr. Justice O'Connor said—

"In my opinion it is only by adopting the wider meaning of the word 'expenditure,' the meaning natural and appropriate in adjusting financial relations between Commonwealth and States under a system of parliamentary government, that full effect can be given to the Constitution."

Mr. Justice Isaacs said—

"Assuming that 'expenditure' is a necessary and implied factor in arriving at 'surplus revenue' for the purpose of section 94, it cannot be understood in the restricted sense of actual payment . . . it appears impossible to read 'expenditure' as confined to the physical act of handing over money to the public creditor."

Mr. Justice Higgins said—

"I am also of opinion with my learned colleagues that on the true construction of section 89 the word 'expenditure' includes not only the moneys actually paid but the moneys which Parliament has appropriated to be expended, until it finds that the money so appropriated is not wanted."

The same definition of "expenditure" is also given by practical accountants. At page 463, vol. 2, of the "Encyclopædia of Accounting," is found the following:—

"*Expenditure.*—The word 'expenditure' was formerly largely used as an equivalent for the term 'payment,' but it is now used more to express the incurring of pecuniary obligations rather than the actual payment. . . . The word 'expenditure' should never be used in the restricted sense of a payment, but in the wider sense of an obligation incurred."

I therefore submit that I was justified in including in the "expenditure" for the year the money paid into a trust fund for a specific purpose approved by Parliament, and which indeed was the only way in which the intention of Parliament could be given effect to. But, further than this, an Executive minute has been passed directing that the money placed to a special trust fund for this specific purpose is to be used for that purpose and no other.

[Mr. Ryan.]

In that trust fund it will be as completely under the supervision of the Auditor-General as if it formed part of the consolidated revenue fund.

Under these circumstances, I submit that you will be able to grant the certificate of discharge prescribed in section 33 of the Audit Act of 1874.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. G. C. HAWTHORNE,

Treasurer.

The Auditor-General, Brisbane.

Audit Department, Queensland,
Brisbane, 7th September, 1910.

Re ITEM OF £70,000 FOR QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY,
ETC.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, furnishing me, in reply to my communication of the 5th idem, with the interpretation of the High Court of Australia as to the meaning attributable to the word "expenditure."

As the opinions of the judges of the High Court were unanimous, and were given in a case practically identical with the one forming the subject of this correspondence, it appears to me that I must accept their decision, as being that of the highest authority in the Commonwealth, and thereby admit that, in the case now under review, "the word 'expenditure' must have a meaning large enough to include authorised as well as actual disbursements"; consequently I must agree with you that I am able, under this wide cover, to grant the certificate of discharge prescribed in section 33 of the Audit Act of 1874.

I do this the more readily as His Excellency the Governor in Council yesterday created a trust fund for the deposit of this £70,000 in the following terms:—

"That a sum of £70,000, which was transferred on the 30th June, 1910, from revenue to the Queensland University and central technical college buildings trust account, be held solely and exclusively for the erection of the University and central technical college buildings, and that no part of the said sum of £70,000 shall be appropriated for any other purpose whatever."

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. W. CONNAH,

Auditor-General.

The Honourable the Treasurer.

Mr. RYAN: This appropriation of £70,000 was the parliamentary appropriation on the Estimates for the year 1909-10, to the extent of £50,000, and on the authority of an Executive Minute, dated 2nd July, the vote was supplemented by an additional £20,000. The Auditor-General, in his letter of 5th September, took the view that he could not grant a certificate to the Treasurer, as this money had not been expended during the year in which it was voted. He thought the view which the Auditor-General took in that letter was right, and that was clear from a consideration of the provisions of section 18 of the Audit Act, which provided—

All sums of money which shall be appropriated to the public service for any year shall be legally available for the services of that year provided that payment on account of the same be made during the said year or during the first three months of the year following.

And all votes which shall be appropriated to the public service for any year and which shall not be expended during such year or within the first three months of the following year shall lapse and

shall not be issued or applied in any future year unless a contract or engagement shall have been made and entered into before the expiration of such year by which a liability so to issue or apply the same shall have been incurred.

The Auditor-General took the view that under that section of the Act he was not entitled to give the necessary certificate under the Audit Act, and in view of that, the Treasurer had written the letter on page 4, in which he cited the case "The State of New South Wales against the Commonwealth," which was reported in volume 7 of the Commonwealth Law Reports, at page 179. And, on the authority of that case, he endeavoured to induce the Auditor-General to sanction his putting aside this £70,000 to a trust fund, although it was not expended during the year in which it was appropriated. To his mind, the Hon the Treasurer, before he wrote such a letter as that, should have taken counsel's advice. The Auditor-General had written stating—

I regret that I am constrained to take exception to the transaction in its present form, which precludes me from granting you a certificate of discharge for the month of June, 1910, as prescribed in the concluding part of section 33 of the Audit Act of 1874.

He refused a certificate under that section, and then the Treasurer wrote him placing a construction upon an important decision of the High Court of Australia, and which he told the Auditor-General, who was a layman, that this decision was on all-fours—

The TREASURER: So it is.

Mr. RYAN: He did not like to express what he thought about the legal opinion that the case was on all-fours, because he did not think it had even any similarity to the case.

The TREASURER: That is your opinion.

Mr. RYAN: That was his opinion, and he thought he was quite as competent to give an opinion as the hon. gentleman who occupied the position of Treasurer.

The TREASURER: You are quite entitled to that opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is only an opinion.

Mr. RYAN: He quite agreed with that; but it was an opinion with which every hon. member having common sense would agree. Before the Treasurer wrote an important letter like that, and induced a layman to grant a certificate under the Audit Act, he should have taken counsel's opinion on the matter.

The TREASURER: He had every opportunity of getting an opinion, and going into any amount of research.

Mr. RYAN: Exactly; and from the wording of the letter it was necessary that he should go into a lot of research, because in the letter there was a suppression of words that should never have been suppressed.

The TREASURER: You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. RYAN: From the manner in which the quotations were put in from the judgment of the High Court, it really left out the gist of what they said.

Mr. Ryan.]

The TREASURER: Not at all.

The PREMIER: You have a very curious opinion of what "gist" is.

Mr. RYAN: That letter was a misleading letter, and it actually misled the Auditor-General in giving that certificate. That was a letter which should never have been written by a professional man to a layman, with the suppression in it that it had.

The TREASURER: Your opinion does not make it a fact.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is a fact, all the same. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. RYAN: There was the statement of the hon. member for Brisbane North, on the Treasurer's side of the House.

The PREMIER: Just another opinion.

Mr. RYAN: It seemed to him that the Treasurer had laid himself out to extract a certificate from the Auditor-General, no matter by what means he got it. In the case of "The Government of New South Wales against the Commonwealth," the Commonwealth had plenary powers in dealing with surplus revenue. There was a special Act called "The Surplus Revenue Act of 1903," which provided in section 5—

Where any trust account has been established under the Audit Acts 1901-1906, and moneys have been appropriated by the Parliament for the purposes of the trust account, or for any purpose for which the trust account is established—

(a) Notwithstanding anything in the Audit Acts 1901-1906, the appropriation shall not lapse nor be deemed to have lapsed at the close of the financial year for the service of which it was made; and

(b) The Treasurer may in any year (subject to section eighty-seven of the Constitution) pay to the credit of the trust account, out of the consolidated revenue fund, such moneys as the Governor-General thinks necessary for the purposes of the appropriation.

Now, in the Commonwealth case, action was taken under that section, and no reference to that fact was made in the letter from the Treasurer to the Auditor-General. The hon. gentleman quoted Sir Samuel Griffith's definition that the word "expenditure" did not necessarily mean disbursement actually made, but he forgot to mention that on page 192 of Sir S. W. Griffith's judgment he said—

In the first place, these appropriations did not purport to be for the service of the financial year in which they were made—1907-1908. They were not limited as to time, and the two sums, so long as they remained credited to their respective accounts, could have been further dealt with as Parliament might direct, though there was nothing to prevent the Executive from disbursing them at once for the purposes defined, so far as statutory authority to do so was concerned. Had they indeed been limited to the services of last financial year, they would still have been available at any time afterwards under section 5 of the Surplus Revenue Act, which applies to every trust account established under the Audit Acts, and saves an appropriation for the purposes of any such account from lapsing "at the close of the financial year for the service of which it was made." Hence *quacunqve via* these are not appropriations the terms of which necessitate their being disbursed within the year, unless there is some constitutional provision which makes it illegal to defer their actual disbursement.

The Treasurer also quoted from the judgment of Mr. Justice Higgins as follows:—

I am also of opinion with my learned colleagues that on the true construction of section 89 the word "expenditure" includes not only the moneys

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actually paid but the moneys which Parliament has appropriated to be expended, until it finds that the money so appropriated is not wanted.

The TREASURER: That is exactly our position.

Mr. RYAN: He quite agreed that was exactly their position, but that was not what Mr. Justice Higgins said. The Treasurer did not finish the sentence which Mr. Justice Higgins used.

The TREASURER: Because the money was wanted here.

Mr. RYAN: He would ask hon. members if that was the true construction to be put upon the sentence which Mr. Justice Higgins used when delivering judgment. He would read what Mr. Justice Higgins actually said. The Treasurer stopped at the word "wanted." Mr. Justice Higgins said—

For I am also of opinion with my learned colleagues that on the true construction of section 89, the word "expenditure" includes not only the moneys actually paid but the moneys which Parliament has appropriated to be expended until it finds that the money so appropriated is not wanted—that is to say, practically until the appropriation lapses.

The TREASURER: Which it had not done in this case.

Mr. RYAN: It did lapse under section 18 of the Audit Act.

The TREASURER: We maintain it did not.

Mr. RYAN: The hon. gentleman stopped at a comma, when the sentence went on to a full stop. He quite admitted that the quotation, as it was taken, fitted the position in which the Treasurer found himself, but it did not fit the position which Mr. Justice Higgins was explaining.

The TREASURER: We allege the appropriation had not lapsed.

Mr. RYAN would like to know on what grounds they alleged it had not lapsed, in the face of section 18 of the Audit Act. The Auditor-General did not know it had not lapsed—they did not place that in the letter.

The TREASURER: Yes, he did; the money was expended.

The PREMIER: That is the whole point.

Mr. RYAN: He was quite prepared to leave the matter to the judgment of hon. members on each side of the House and to the profession outside the House.

The TREASURER: So am I.

Mr. RYAN: Mr. Justice Higgins went on to say—

In this case, by the express provision of section 5 of the Surplus Revenue Act, the provisions of the Audit Act (section 36), which makes appropriations lapse at the close of the financial year, are made inapplicable to trust accounts such as those now in question.

He had addressed some questions to the Treasurer in regard to that letter, and asked why he had left out those words, and the hon.

gentleman referred him (Mr. Ryan) to pages 3, 4, and 5 of the Auditor-General's report.

The TREASURER: That is my case.

Mr. RYAN: That was clearly an evasion of the question, and, strangely enough, the Press, which was not altogether favourable to his party, were candid enough to admit that the question was evaded. He (Mr. Ryan) subsequently asked the Treasurer would he point out where on pages 3, 4, and 5 of the Auditor-General's report he could find the information asked for, and the hon. gentleman again referred him to the same pages, without giving any explanation. He considered it was a very serious matter, and it was a matter on which they should rise superior to party politics. It was getting over an Act of Parliament, whether it was deliberate or not. He did not desire to say absolutely that the Treasurer intentionally misled the Auditor-General, but, as the hon. gentleman had not taken counsel's opinion, the Auditor-General had been misled.

The TREASURER: In your opinion.

Mr. RYAN: Certainly in his opinion.

The PREMIER: But you should not state it as an infallible fact, because it is your opinion.

Mr. RYAN: He was not stating it as an infallible fact; he merely was giving it as his opinion. The mere fact that the Premier was interjecting so much showed clearly that it was not the Treasurer who had concocted those letters. He had no doubt it was done by the instruction of the Premier.

The TREASURER: There is no concoction about it.

Mr. RYAN: To his mind, it was very misleading. It was a suppression of the truth. It was a matter which should be seriously discussed, and some action should be taken in the way of a motion to reduce the vote, because there was no doubt that the Auditor-General had been misled into giving a certificate under the Audit Act when it should never have been granted.

Mr. HARDACRE: He would like to hear some reply from the Treasurer to the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo regarding the matter of the Auditor-General.

The PREMIER: Everything is ready.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was not a matter for the Premier at all; it was a matter for the country, and a matter of importance as to how they were to conduct the finances in the future. From the remarks of the hon. member for Barcoo it seemed to him that the Treasurer in his Financial Statement, and the Premier in supporting that Statement, did not lay down an analogous case to that decided by Mr. Justice Higgins. The two cases were quite different, under different Acts and under different conditions.

Mr. MACARTNEY thought it was rather surprising that the hon. gentleman who led the Government did not think it necessary

to reply to such a serious question as that raised by the hon. member for Barcoo.

The PREMIER: I do think it necessary.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman was allowing the vote to go through without an explanation. It was a matter which demanded the keenest attention of every hon. member. He did not know of any matter that had come before the Chamber of so much importance, and it certainly was a matter that should not be allowed to go without some notice from both sides of the House. It was a many-sided matter—an important matter—and he regretted that the alteration of the Standing Orders did not allow a proper discussion of it. It was one of those cases where perhaps twenty minutes or half an hour was not sufficient for a full elucidation of the question. There were many aspects of it—amongst others there was the position of the Auditor-General himself, and the legality of the action of the Minister. There was the aspect touched upon by the hon. member for Barcoo, which they as members could hardly allow to pass. He had no doubt that what was done by the Treasurer in this matter, so far as the operation of the vote was concerned, was illegal. There might be nothing wrong in the action the Chief Secretary had taken; it might perhaps be regarded as meritorious; and if the Treasurer had gone the right way about it he might have counted on the support of the majority—perhaps every member—of the Assembly. The expenditure of £70,000 on the University was recognised as a necessity, and when he realised that if the vote was allowed to lapse he might not be able during the present financial year to provide the money necessary to replace the lapsed vote, he was perhaps doing a wise thing in not allowing it to lapse; but he could have said to the Auditor-General, "Under the special circumstances of the case, I propose to take an unusual course. It is contrary to the Audit Act, and to the Act which provides that a surplus should go to the trustees of the public debt reduction fund. I will not ask you to give me a certificate. I will go to Parliament for approval"—in the same way as he stated he would ask for approval with respect to the £20,000. If he had taken that course, it might have been a proper and fair way of dealing with the matter, and he would have obtained the support of members on both sides. (Hear, hear!) Instead of taking that course, unfortunately, the Premier decided what he was going to do, and a course of conduct was followed, so far as the Auditor-General was concerned, of which he, for one, was unable to approve. A letter was written—by whom one could not say—bearing the Treasurer's signature. The Treasurer, with his legal qualifications, was competent to put the case fairly and squarely before any officer of the Government, but he was not prepared to say the case was fairly put before the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General was not told of the special facts, or of the special legislation in force in the Commonwealth, on which that particular case turned. They were not mentioned. The Treasurer contented himself with saying it was on all-fours. He regretted to say that no one reading the case could come to the conclusion that it was on all-fours.

The TREASURER: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It was a matter of opinion on which any honest man would have

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no difficulty in expressing himself. (Hear, hear!) He did not know that their standard of conduct in that Chamber was different from what it ought to be anywhere else; but if the hon. gentleman quoted that case before a judge of the Supreme Court in the way he quoted it to the Auditor-General, he would hear a great deal more about it. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that all he had to do was to get the certificate of the Auditor-General; and having got that, everything was all right. He approached the Auditor-General in the way that letter was framed, and succeeded in getting the certificate of the Auditor-General, and rested the case on the certificate of the Auditor-General, under section 33 of the Audit Act. He (Mr. Macartney) could not look at it in that way. That showed perhaps why the Auditor-General was addressed in the way he was addressed. He would not make these remarks were it not for the way in which Ministers had to-night taken up the suggestion made. Instead of meeting it fairly, they wished to get out of it as a matter of opinion on which men might differ. He saw no reason for taking it in that way. The thing ought to be met now as it ought to have been met at first. There was no room for a difference of opinion. It was an unpleasant thing to have to refer to the correspondence in that way, but the correspondence spoke for itself. Unfortunately, the Auditor-General was a layman, and the letter was constructed so as not to give him room to think that there was anything more to look at. There was not even a suggestion that he should protect himself by referring to the Crown Law Office or the Attorney-General, or that he should take outside legal opinion. It was true that he could have referred the matter to the Attorney-General or to a barrister; but the Auditor-General was a layman, and he had a statement of the case put before him which was complete in itself, and did not suggest that there might be matters to which he should apply his mind. He owed a serious duty to that House; and he regretted to say that, in his opinion, the Auditor-General had failed in his duty to the House. If there was any virtue in the provisions of the Audit Act, it was that the Auditor-General would take the House into his confidence in all matters concerning any departure from the provisions of the Act; and apparently in this case he had clear doubt in his own mind as to whether the action was a proper one or not. He clearly and properly stated it in his first letter; and but for the letter written from the Treasury he had no doubt the certificate would not have been given, and the matter would have been reported to the House for consideration in the usual way. Instead of that, by reason of that very letter, the Auditor-General granted the certificate without, to his mind, sufficient inquiry. He supposed that the Auditor-General relied on the fact that the Hon. the Treasurer was a man of legal standing, and that he put matters before him fully and fairly. He thought the Auditor-General ought to have taken an independent opinion and reported the matter to the House without granting the certificate. If they found in a matter of this sort the Auditor-General was even lax in the performance of his duty, what must they suppose in regard to smaller matters that might not perhaps attract so much notice? If the

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hon. gentleman had sent to the Auditor-General the Commonwealth report telling him the case spoke for itself, one might say he did all that could be demanded.

The TREASURER: I gave him all the particulars, and I presumed he had all the knowledge.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman might say that as much as he liked, but there was the letter, and there was no necessity why the Auditor-General, as a layman, should go outside that letter.

[10 p.m.] There was no suggestion that the Auditor-General should fortify himself by any other information. The crux of the matter was this: They had an Audit Act, and the matter should have been reported by the Auditor-General to the House; but, instead of that course being adopted, the money had been diverted to a trust fund without any legislative authority, such as the Commonwealth authorities, at any rate, thought it necessary when they passed legislation specially providing for the creation of trust funds accounts and the operation thereon.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: The authority for that should have been received from the House, and the effect was practically this: That the Treasurer for the time being could practically decide whether they were to have a surplus or whether they were to have a deficit—how much that surplus was to be, or how much that deficit was to be.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: They must see from the statutes that if there was any surplus it must go to the trustees under the public debt reduction fund.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: But if the Treasurer was allowed to pay that money into trust account without any legislative authority, then it was open to the Treasurer to say what the surplus should be, or whether there should be a surplus at all.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: Not only did it affect the question of the lapsed vote, it seriously affected the State's legislation. Instead of paying the amount into the public debt reduction fund, the Treasurer could, at his own sweet will, take, without legislative authority, any amount he wanted for that particular year.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: It was never the intention of Parliament that it should delegate its powers in that way. He did not mean to labour the question at any greater length. He thought it was a very serious thing, and it should receive consideration from members on both sides of the Chamber. If they passed a matter of that kind to-day for a Government which they supported, he did not see how they could criticise a Government from the other side when they came into power and did a similar thing.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: It is establishing a precedent.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There were some things which they must discuss from a high standpoint, and not altogether as members of a party—

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: And this matter was one of them. (Hear, hear!) If a vote was moved for the reduction of the present Estimates as a protest against the course that had been adopted, then he could only say that he would throw in his lot with that vote.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: They did that thing when they could have put the matter right so simply, but they did not take the simple course and the right course; they took a course that was without legislative authority.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He thought this was a very important matter, not only because of the principle involved in the action of the Treasurer and the action of the Auditor-General but because the chief imputation was that the Auditor-General was not competent. That was a very serious thing to say—that the Auditor-General, an officer appointed and responsible to the House, had been induced by the Treasurer or had been induced by the Government to give a certificate—to give a discharge at the end of the year—when he ought not legally to have given that discharge—that the thing was illegal, and he ought not to have done it. That was a very serious charge to make against the Auditor-General.

Mr. BLAIR: And against the Government, too.

The PREMIER: He also agreed with the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Macartney, that there were some things where a man should put party allegiance aside in dealing with them, and he noticed how cheerfully the "Hear, hears!" came from the other side of the House.

Mr. MULLAN: You are playing the party game now. This is not a party matter.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members to allow the Chief Secretary to be heard in silence. (Hear, hear!) The question is one of very great importance. (Hear, hear!) The House has listened to the hon. member for Barcoo and the hon. member for Brisbane North, and just in the same way they should listen to the Chief Secretary, and allow him to make his statement as he considers it necessary to make it.

The PREMIER: The Government may be right or wrong in this matter, but he had no doubt about it himself. He considered that the Government had acted rightly and legally. Of course, he was not infallible in these matters any more than other members of the Chamber, but he had not the slightest doubt in his own mind that the Treasurer's action was a perfectly legal one, and that the Auditor-General's action was the only action which the Auditor-General could take. He might be mistaken in that, but that was his honest conviction. He admitted, and hon. gentlemen recognised, that that was not only an important matter but it was a matter on which they might well differ. He ventured to make this prediction on this non-party matter. It was not a non-party

matter with him by any means, but how the other side welcomed it as a non-party matter.

Mr. HAMILTON: You are imputing motives now.

The PREMIER: He ventured to predict that there was not one man on the other side of the House who would have the slightest doubt on this question.

Mr. MULLAN: You are trying to make it a party matter straight away.

The PREMIER: He was posing as a prophet.

Mr. LENNON: It might be very unprofitable.

The PREMIER: He was taking the risk of that.

Mr. FERRICKS: Let him go.

The PREMIER: He wanted to show why the Government considered that they were justified in taking the action they did and why they considered that action was quite legal. The action they took was really the proper action to take under the circumstances. He wanted also to appeal to the common sense of members on this ground: That the Government were not likely to take a course of conduct which they themselves considered was illegal, when they knew quite well that in view of the purposes for which they wanted to reserve that money the House was likely to approve of it being so reserved.

The TREASURER: Without any trouble.

The PREMIER: Why, therefore, should the Government take an illegal course, knowing it to be illegal? He was not saying that they might not be mistaken, but what he wanted to point out was that there was no reason for the Government taking an illegal course if they thought it was an illegal course. They were just as liable to be mistaken as other members of the House, but here was the position: The House appropriated £50,000 last year for University and technical college purposes. Hon. members knew at the time that it was impossible to spend any appreciable part of that money during the current financial year. Just let him say that there were two sums of money in question. There was the £50,000 appropriated by Parliament last year and the £20,000 which the Government took on their Ministerial responsibility, and he wanted to distinguish between the two sums. If the House had anything to say against the using the £20,000 in that way, good and well. Ministers took it on their own responsibility, and it came down on the Supplementary Estimates. When it came before them on the Supplementary Estimates they gave their judgment, and approved or disapproved of what the Government had done. With regard to the £50,000, the matter was different. The £50,000 was appropriated by Parliament for certain specified purposes. The money had not been spent for those purposes, but did any man say that the Government were not under an engagement to carry out the expenditure for the University? Was it not carrying out the intention of the House to make sure that they would have that money for the University? It was clearly impossible to provide that money out of this year's revenue. Everybody recognised that. If they could not legally appropriate the £50,000 they had out of last year's revenue, from which it had been appropriated, there would have been no £50,000 without fresh taxation this year.

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Mr. HARDACRE: Or an Act to take it out of the public debt reduction fund.

The PREMIER: The Government could have done it all the same, and have asked Parliament to pass an indemnity Bill. The Government could have taken the responsibility of doing what they did, and have asked the House to pass an indemnity Bill. He did not think there would have been any question of the House approving of their safeguarding that money for University purposes.

Mr. LENNON: Safeguarding it?

The PREMIER: The Government taking care that the money which Parliament had appropriated for a University would be used for that purpose. They knew, and Parliament knew, that they would not have that amount of money to devote to that purpose this year. The reason the Government took the course they did, instead of the one that had been suggested, he would now explain. About 1908 the Federal Government passed a Surplus Revenue Bill, and they appropriated certain moneys at the end of the year for Federal purposes which some of the States believed should have been devoted to State purposes. Both the hon. member for Barcoo, Mr. Ryan, and the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Macartney, had spoken about this matter as if the Surplus Revenue Bill was the thing which made the Federal case resemble the Queensland case.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That was not my contention.

The PREMIER: But that was not so. The thing that made the two cases resemble one another—that made the thing this Government had done exactly parallel to what was done by the Federal Government and approved by the Federal Parliament—was this: The Federal Constitution provided that after the expenditure for the year had been declared by the Government all the money that was left over should be paid to the States—that after the Federal Government said what was their expenditure the rest of the money was no longer theirs, but was to be paid over to the States. And they passed a Surplus Revenue Act for dealing with the matter. In Queensland, after the Treasurer declared what his expenditure for the year had been, the money remaining in his hands went into the public debt reduction fund. Neither the State Treasurer nor the Federal Treasurer had any discretion as to what was to be done with the surplus once it was declared.

Mr. LENNON: He juggled with that surplus, and reduced it down.

The PREMIER: He wanted hon. members to understand this point, because it all hinged on this: When the Treasurer declared that he had a certain surplus, he had no longer any right to deal with it—he had lost the legal right to handle a penny of that money; he must pay it into the public debt reduction fund. In like manner the Federal Treasurer, when he declared his surplus, lost control over it—he could not put it into a trust fund, but had to pay it over to those to whom it belonged—the State Treasurers.

Mr. BLAIR: Before you go any further—Didn't the surplus the Treasurer declared exclude this disputed amount?

The PREMIER: Certainly.

Mr. BLAIR: That is what I say, and, as the leader of the Opposition says, he juggled it.

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The PREMIER: The hon. member may say so.

Mr. BLAIR: I am not saying it offensively.

The PREMIER: The charge against the Treasurer was, not that jugglery took place in determining the surplus, but that the money was used in a way that the Treasurer had no business to use it. He wanted to show that both the Federal Treasurer and the State Treasurer were bound in exactly the same way. After they had declared what their revenue was, and what their expenditure was, the balance between the two legally passed beyond their control—in the one case to the State Treasurers, and in the other case to the public debt reduction fund.

Mr. BLAIR: But he was not bound, except to the extent of the surplus he declared.

The PREMIER: Both Treasurers were bound to show an account—they were bound to show the revenue they had received, and they were bound to show what their expenditure had been, and the difference between the two the Treasurer in both cases lost control over. Was not that clear?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. LENNON: But he improperly showed his expenditure.

The PREMIER: Never mind about that just now. He would show hon. members, if they would be a little patient, that the whole crux of the matter lay in the facts he was stating. He was trying to show why the Government believed the action they took was the right action, and how the two cases were exactly parallel. Had he not shown that they were exactly parallel so far—that in both cases the Treasurer must declare what his revenue had been and what his expenditure had been, and that the balance, if there was any balance, between the two had legally passed beyond his control? The Federal Treasurer wanted to put money into a trust fund—he wanted to take some of the surplus, the difference between his revenue and his expenditure, and put it into a trust fund for Federal purposes approved by Parliament, instead of giving it to the States. But he knew that if he declared a surplus he could not put it into a trust fund—it had gone beyond his legal control. So, before he declared a surplus, he put into a trust fund the part he required for Federal purposes. He showed the Auditor-General that here was his revenue—

Mr. MACARTNEY: He acted under the authority of the special Act.

The PREMIER: He did not intend to discuss legal points with the hon. member. It would be presumptuous for him to attempt to do so. The special Act did not affect the constitutionality of the transaction at all. It was not the Surplus Revenue Act that limited the power of the Federal Treasurer. His power was limited by the Constitution. The Federal Constitution provided that he had to give an account of his revenue and of his expenditure, and pay over the balance. Was not that the law?

Mr. MACARTNEY: No.

The PREMIER: The Surplus Revenue Act did not affect the obligation of the Federal Treasurer to pay over the difference between his revenue and his expenditure to the State Treasurers.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Don't forget the special appropriation under the special provisions of the special Audit Act.

The PREMIER: But the Federal Parliament had no power to alter the Federal Con-

stitution. No special Audit Act and no Surplus Revenue Act could enable the Federal Treasurer or the Federal Parliament to evade the Constitution. That Constitution laid down what his revenue was and what his expenditure was, and that the balance of his revenue belonged to the States.

Mr. HARDACRE: Does the Constitution define "expenditure"?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. HARDACRE: That is the question.

The PREMIER: The Government thought the two cases exactly parallel. The Federal Treasurer stated what his revenue was and what his expenditure was; and part of the amount he stated as expenditure was money not expended at all, but money that was paid into a trust fund for the carrying out in the future of purposes authorised by Parliament. That was why the States challenged the right of the Federal Treasurer to retain that money. They said, "That is not expenditure at all. You have not spent that money at all, and it belongs to us." The case went before the High Court, and the whole matter turned, not upon the provisions of the Surplus Revenue Act but upon what constituted expenditure. He was not going to attempt to quote *in extenso* the judgments given by the judges of the High Court, because in five minutes the Chairman would leave the chair, but here was the point—

Mr. BLAIR: Did you get an opinion on that, if it is not an unfair question?

The PREMIER: No. He did not think of an opinion.

Mr. BLAIR: Did the Treasurer get an opinion?

The TREASURER: No. I have already said so in reply to the hon. member for Barcoo.

The PREMIER: The whole question turned upon whether the money that the Federal Treasurer paid into the trust fund was expenditure. If that was expenditure, then the States had no claim to the money. If it was not expenditure, then it was surplus revenue, and the States ought to get it. The High Court unanimously declared that money not actually disbursed but paid into a trust fund was expenditure.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Our Audit Act says "actually and duly disbursed."

The TREASURER: It says, "which has not been expended."

Mr. MACARTNEY: No. The Auditor-General gives his certificate under section 33, which uses the words "actually and duly disbursed."

The PREMIER: They believed that the cases were exactly parallel, and that they might claim as expenditure for last year money which, although not actually disbursed, was appropriated by Parliament, and was put into a trust fund where it could only be used for the purpose for which Parliament appropriated it. They thought that was legitimately called "expenditure," as in an account of the revenue and expenditure for the year. When the Auditor-General wrote to the Treasurer pointing out that the transaction was irregular, the Treasurer, as had been shown already by the correspondence published by the Auditor-General, made a statement of the case as it appeared to him, showing how he thought the two cases were exactly parallel, and giving, in addition, as hon. members would see, a definition of expenditure from the "Encyclopædia of Accounting," which was not a legal document like the law reports of the High Court, but which showed the wider meaning that might

be legitimately given to the term "expenditure" in dealing with accounts, and which was in strict accordance with the judgment of every one of the judges of the High Court.

Mr. MACARTNEY: As defined in a particular statute.

The PREMIER: No; he was dealing with their judgment as to the larger meaning of the word. Upon receipt of that letter, the Auditor-General was of opinion that he would be justified in giving the Treasurer a discharge for the year.

Mr. LENNON: He was overborne—he was overridden.

The PREMIER: Why should the Auditor-General be overborne? It was not fair to say so. He was not saying it was not fair to say it of the Government, but it was not fair to the Auditor-General.

Mr. MULLAN: That letter was not fair to him.

The PREMIER: The Auditor-General was of opinion that the explanation of the Treasurer justified him in giving him a discharge for the year. Now, that covered the whole thing. When the Hon. the Treasurer delivered his Financial Statement, before the House knew anything about the matter, he gave a detailed account of what he had done and why he had done it.

Mr. LENNON: And I told the Treasurer that it should have gone into lapsed votes.

The PREMIER: Then the hon. member was wrong when he told the Treasurer that. He (Mr. Kidston) thought the Treasurer acted strictly in accordance with the Constitution, as they understood it. The case was on exactly all-fours with the Federal case.

Mr. MURPHY: Why didn't you do as Mr. Philp did, and submit the matter to a leading barrister, and give hon. members that opinion?

The PREMIER: Because the case seemed so simple to him then, and it seemed simple to him now.

Mr. MURPHY: That was a very simple solution of the difficulty—to do as I suggest.

The PREMIER: If any hon. member had any doubt in his own mind, it was for him to go to a lawyer. Right or wrong, he had no doubt that he could get a lawyer on the other side, if the hon. gentleman trotted out one.

Mr. MURPHY: I am not trotting out one. Your party trotted out a clever lawyer.

The PREMIER: The Government, acting as they believed rightly, took the action which was endorsed by the Auditor-General, and, so far as he knew, that completed the whole transaction for the year.

Mr. MURPHY: Mr. Acting Chairman,—I call your attention to the clock. (Laughter.)

At 10.30 p.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the Sessional Order, it is now my duty to leave the chair, and report progress to the House.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House do now adjourn. After the third reading of the State Education Acts Amendment Bill on Tuesday, which should be only a formal matter, we will take the second reading of the Local Authorities Bill.

Mr. MULLAN: Still up to your old jokes.

The PREMIER: I am not going to start a discussion. I would just like to say that I hope that by Thursday next we may be able

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to dispose of the Local Authorities Bill—the second reading and Committee stages. It is a short Bill, and I would like to do that.

Mr. MURPHY: You have been decent to-night.

Mr. LENNON: I think that it is just as well the House should adjourn, but I would like to say that, on the attitude of the Chief Secretary, I think it is quite possible that we may be able to get through the second reading of the Local Authorities Bill in the time specified. (Hear, hear!) The attitude the hon. gentleman has assumed to-day is very much more agreeable to the House than that adopted on former occasions in regard to measures that he wanted to bludgeon through the House. I am sorry that time prevented me from replying to the remarks of the hon. gentleman in regard to the hole the Treasury have got themselves into. However, I must reserve any comments I have to make on that until the opportunity is again afforded me.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-six minutes to 11 o'clock.
