

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 1914

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MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER, 1914.

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

QUESTIONS.

TEACHERS IN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

Mr. GRANT (*Fitzroy*), on behalf of Mr. Stevens, asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"What steps have been taken to conserve the interests of those State school teachers who have joined or may join the Expeditionary Forces with regard to their participation in the superannuation insurance scheme?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. W. Blair, *Ipswich*) replied—

"On 24th September last the Chief Secretary replied as follows to a question by the member for Fitzroy:—

'The Government will provide—

1. The entire contributions to the superannuation fund, in cases where the military pay is less, by such contributions or by a greater amount, than the civil pay.
2. So much of the contributions to the superannuation fund as added to the military pay would make the latter equal to the civil pay, in cases where the excess of civil pay over military pay is less than the amount of the said contributions. In all other cases the public servant himself will provide the contributions.'

The Department of Public Instruction is acting in accordance with that arrangement."

WHEAT GROWING IN CENTRAL QUEENSLAND.

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

"1. Is it true, as stated in the metropolitan Press, that the Government are arranging for the extension of the wheat-growing areas in Queensland?

"2. If so, will the areas of land in Central Queensland capable of growing wheat be included in these arrangements?"

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Ocey*) replied—

"1. Under approved conditions, the Government will provide seed wheat, and, if necessary, assist to get the crop in.

"2. The same consideration will be extended to Central as to Southern Queensland."

ACCOMMODATION AT BABINDA.

Mr. McCORMACK (*Cairns*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Is he aware that the closing of the hotels in the Babinda area has left the place without any accommodation for the travelling public?

"2. Will he expedite the leasing of the township land at Babinda so that

accommodation houses may be erected, or will he take action to provide such accommodation under clause 11, subsection 4, of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, 1911?"

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*) replied—

"1. No.

"2. Yes."

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

(*Mr. Stodart, Logan, in the chair.*)

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT. INDUSTRIAL COURT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*) moved that £3,340 be granted for "Industrial Court." It would be noticed that the item was £80 more than the amount voted last year, which was accounted for by the appointment of a junior clerk at £80 per annum.

Question put and passed.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that £10,920 be granted for "Inspection of Machinery." Hon. members would notice that there was an increase to the Chief Inspector of Machinery of £20. It was only fair to state that before the close of the year 1913 it was pointed out that the Inspector of Machinery was getting very much less than was paid for similar duties in other States. He was a particularly good officer, and as his responsibilities were very great, it was only right that he should receive consideration. There was a reduction in the number of inspectors of machinery, from twenty-one to twenty, as since the introduction of motor-cars for the use of inspectors, they were able to compass a great deal more work than formerly.

Mr. BOWMAN: How many motor-cars have you got?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There were four motor-cars in the country, and in addition there were motor-cars in the city for the use of inspectors of scaffolding, etc.

Mr. THEODORE (*Chillagoe*): The Committee were up against the same proposition in connection with this vote as occurred in regard to other votes, that was the surreptitious increasing of the salaries of certain highly paid officials. The Government gave an undertaking, before the introduction of the Estimates, that there would be no increases, as they were unable to give the automatic increases. No one could justify the giving of increases to the higher paid officials and at the same time knocking off the automatic increases. Certain members of the Opposition, himself amongst them, had contended that the Government should not have stopped the automatic increases, particularly those in the lower grades of the service; and, if there was any difficulty about financing, the difficulty should have been met in some other way, so that those best able would have had to bear the burden. However, the Government had thought otherwise, and had stopped the automatic increases this year—in three departments of

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the service it interfered with the individual worker very considerably, that was in the Police Department, Railway Department, and Education Department—yet they saw that the Chief Inspector of Machinery was down for a £20 increase. He was not going to say that Mr. Henderson was not worth the amount it was proposed to give him, as he was a thoroughly efficient officer, and he had no complaint to make against him. He was probably worth more than it was proposed to give him, but the highly paid men in the public service should not be singled out for special treatment. If those men could be given increases by Executive minute, then the men working on the railways, who had been clamouring for an increase since last year and who were promised favourable consideration by the Secretary for Railways, should have received increases. They had been compelled to forego their increases owing to the war. It was setting a very bad precedent to have one mode of procedure for granting increases to men in the higher branches of the service and another mode of procedure for the lower paid men. The latter could not get an increase unless it was approved of by Parliament, but the former could get increases by Executive minute. If it was true, as stated by the Minister, that Mr. Henderson was only being brought up to the level of men performing similar duties in the other States, how was it that his claims were overlooked last year and nothing was done until the beginning of this year?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was done last year.

Mr. THEODORE: That was all the more reason why it should have been submitted to Parliament when last year's Estimates were under discussion. In order to be consistent, he moved that the vote be reduced by £20. At the same time, he wanted it to be clearly understood that the amendment was not directed against the occupant of the office, but only against the action of the Government in giving preference to highly paid officers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He was careful to explain, when dealing with other votes the other evening, that one of the caretakers was given an increase of £10, the women cleaners all got increases, and the typists also received increases. All those increases—like the one now under consideration—were granted prior to the outbreak of war. It would, therefore, be seen that, so far as that department was concerned, it was not only highly paid officials who had received increases.

Mr. KIRWAN: When did the women cleaners get their increase?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They had been granted from 1st February. There had been a disposition on the part of the department to do a fair thing all round. While he had no desire to excuse the department for overlooking Mr. Henderson's claim last year, if the present condition of things could have been foreseen, the increase would not have been granted. At the same time, if it was wrong in the case of Mr. Henderson, it was equally wrong in the case of the others of whom he had spoken.

Mr. BOWMAN: That does not apply with respect to the departments controlled by other Ministers.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He thought it did. He could answer for his own departments, and his colleagues were able to answer for theirs. This was the only case of an officer drawing a high salary in any of the departments under his control who was receiving an increase.

Mr. BERTRAM: Your explanation is different from that given by other Ministers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He did not admit that. Whatever was done by any other Minister, he (Mr. Barnes) was just as responsible for as his colleagues. They were all responsible for what was done in all the departments, and he had no wish to shelter himself behind any of his colleagues. He hoped the hon. member for Chillagoe would withdraw his amendment.

Mr. HAMILTON (Gregory): The Minister might have proved to his own satisfaction that he was doing the fair thing by the employees in this department, but he had not proved it to his (Mr. Hamilton's) satisfaction. The trend in every department was to grant increases by Executive minute to officers drawing high salaries. At the same time, there were thousands of those in the lower grades of the service who were not getting the automatic increases which formed a part of the agreement entered into when they joined the public service. The Minister wanted to make out that it was because of the war that general increases had not been given, as though the Queensland Government were bearing the whole burden of the war. The Commonwealth Government were providing the means for carrying on the war, so far as Australia was concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Don't forget that we are the only Government in Australia that is not reducing salaries.

Mr. HAMILTON: He considered they were reducing salaries when they were withholding the automatic increases which were a matter of agreement between the Government and those who entered the service. The Government showed that their sympathies were all for the highly paid public servants and that they did not care for the interests of the low paid members of the service.

The PREMIER: What do you regard as a highly paid officer?

Mr. HAMILTON: Those getting over £400 a year. Nearly every officer in receipt of £600 or £700 a year had got a motor-car provided for him, in which he ran his family out on a Sunday. When they came to the Lands Department, they would find the men with the biggest salaries getting increases, yet there was no money to grant the automatic increases to the lower paid men.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no one in the Lands Department who has received an increase since the 1st of July.

Mr. HAMILTON: They received increases since the Estimates were passed last year. The increases were granted surreptitiously. If a Minister wished to increase the salary of any public servant in his department, he should put it on the Estimates and ask the House to approve of it, but that course had not been followed. A lot of these men had been drawing increases by Executive minute since the last Estimates were passed. That was a wrong thing to do. The Government showed that its sympathy was with the

higher paid officials in the service, but they had no time for the smaller paid officials. At a time like this the higher paid officials should make some sacrifice in the interests of the country.

Mr. BERTRAM (*Maree*) protested against the action of the Government in granting increases to the highly paid servants while no increases were granted to the lower paid men. It was all very well to say that the man receiving the increase was paid less than men occupying similar positions in the other States. More shame to the Government for not paying him the same rate as the other States! The fact remained that at the beginning of the session the Government intimated that no increases were being granted to any of the public service this year, yet increases were given to men who were practically at the top of the ladder in the service. He protested against increases being given to men getting £600 a year while there were hundreds of men in the Railway Department who were being underpaid. If the argument that these men got an increase because they had been paid less than public servants in other States held good in their cases, then it would also hold good with respect to many of the lower paid public servants. The school teachers in Queensland were paid less than New South Wales paid their school teachers, and yet they got no increases. It showed that the men who got the ear of the Minister were placed in a favourable position.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is quite evident that the cleaners got the ear of the Minister, then.

Mr. BERTRAM: If it had not been for the noise made by Opposition members last year about the cleaners being underpaid, they would not have got their increases. The men in the high positions were given preferential treatment, while the navvies getting 8s. and 9s. a day were overlooked. The "Courier" of to-day showed how the highly paid officers received preferential treatment. It mentioned the names of half a dozen highly paid officers of the Railway Department who took a day off and went down as far as Wallangarra to meet the Railway Commissioner. Who was doing the work of these officials while they were away?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They did their work in the train.

Mr. BERTRAM: How could they do their work in the train? If an unfortunate navvy wanted a day off to go to Wallangarra, he would have to pay his own fare, and he would lose his day's wages into the bargain, yet all these highly paid officials could get away without any trouble.

The PREMIER: Facts show that it was all mere talk on the part of the hon. members opposite about increases being given to the highly paid servants of the State. One would imagine that there had been numerous increases amongst the highly paid officers. Such is not the case. When the hon. member for Gregory was speaking, I asked him what he regarded as a high salary, and he said £400 a year. On looking up the list, he found that there were only four officers getting over £400 a year who had received increases early this year, and that covered the whole of the departments other than railways. Those officers were Captain

Pennefather, Comptroller-General of Prisons, Dr. Nicholl, Superintendent of the Asylum at Toowoomba, Dr. Dods, Government Medical Officer at Brisbane, and Mr. A. A. Spowers, Surveyor-General.

Mr. FIEHELLY: What about Mr. Gall, Under Home Secretary?

Mr. THEODORE: What about Mr. Crowther and Mr. Davidson, in the Railway Department?

The PREMIER: With regard to Mr. Gall, he was transferred to the position of Under Secretary in the Home Secretary's Office, and he got the salary attached to the office of Under Secretary. The Ministers had truthfully stated that no increases had been granted this financial year. The Estimates as at first prepared provided not only for automatic increases but also for increases to other officers throughout the service. But, owing to the war, they had to recast the Estimates, and no increases were given at all on the Estimates for the current year. Out of the whole of the departments there were only four officers getting over £400 a year whose salaries were increased during last financial year.

Mr. THEODORE: What about Davidson and Crowther?

Mr. KIRWAN: They got bonuses.

The PREMIER: The list of increases, which was drawn up by the secretary to the Public Service Board, showed that only four officers getting £400 and over received increases. Taking those whose salaries were over £300 and under £400, two veterinary surgeons got increases because it was found that certain officers were being enticed by another public service, and in order to hold them, increases of £15 and £35 were granted. Then there was an increase which was under review now—Mr. Henderson,

[4 p.m.] Chief Inspector of Machinery.

He could not explain why that was so, but his colleague would be able to do so.

Mr. BOWMAN: Are there any increases in the lower grades?

The PREMIER: Yes; fourteen slaughter-house inspectors at £250 a year were increased to £220 a year. It would be revealed by "Hansard" last year that reference was made to salaries paid to slaughter-house inspectors by the hon. member for Enoggera and the hon. member for Ithaca, who pressed that the salary was inadequate, and those officers had been granted an increase. There were a few others in the department, but in all there had only been twenty-eight increases on the Estimates during the current year. Then there were forty women cleaners.

Mr. FIEHELLY: What rise did they get?

The PREMIER: It did not matter what the amount was; it is a question of principle, and they were dealt with in the same manner precisely as other officers. If it was considered the salary was insufficient, increases were recommended. All through the history of the State there had been a review of the Estimates at the end of the session of Parliament. Representations were made during the debate which the Minister took a note of, and in January they considered whether certain persons should be increased, and most of the increases given, except in regard to the doctors, and Mr. Spowers and Mr. Henderson, had been under

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discussion in the House. The fact remained that only four, whose salaries were above £400, got an increase, and forty, whose salaries were low down and up to as high as £220, got an increase. Nothing irregular had been done. It was absolutely true that no salaries had been increased on the Estimates this financial year. In regard to the asylums, they found that the doctors would not remain there at the salaries they were receiving, and the mere increase of £50 was inconsiderable as compared with the comfort and the benefit that would accrue to the patients there. It was a mere bagatelle.

Mr. HAMILTON: We are not arguing that any of them are overpaid.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was merely trying to make political capital out of the four increases to which he had referred; and he wished to say that the increases made during recess were made to professional men whose services we desired to retain.

Mr. HAMILTON: What is the amount of the increases to these women cleaners?

The PREMIER: Cleaners and watchmen are getting from £58 to £120 per annum.

Mr. FIELLY: By Executive minute?

The PREMIER: Exactly the same way. One would think that an Executive minute was something exceptional, but if they went back they would find that the same thing had been done year after year, only that there had been fewer increases this year than in previous years, and hon. members would not have taken any notice of it had they not thought there was a chance of making political capital out of it. The railway men who remained on the same mark as last year would have got their increases if circumstances had not prevented it; but last year and the year before they had received great consideration. Hundreds of thousands of pounds had been paid in increases of salaries during the last three or four years.

Mr. FIELLY: The Premier's statement was as plausible as it was weak. He failed to mention several highly-paid officers who received substantial increments. He had in his hand figures showing that Mr. Gall, in the Home Office, went from £600 to £800; Mr. Gordon Graham, in the Lands Department, from £580 to £800; and Mr. Board from £550 to £700. In Mr. Board's case, there was not even the excuse that his predecessor got the same salary that Mr. Board was getting now. The excuse so far had been that an officer was permitted to get the salary attending the position. The position occupied by Mr. Board at the present time had only had a salary of £580 last year, and this year it was £700.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is doing more work—two men's work.

Mr. FIELLY: He had a good opinion of Mr. Board, but it was impossible to say that any man could do two men's work unless one was superfluous last year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You will have an opportunity of bringing that up on the Lands Estimates.

Mr. FIELLY: He would do that, and he hoped the Minister would give a better explanation, as this was a very poor one. The Commissioner for Railways was also getting an increase of £250. They heard about the women cleaners getting an in-

crease, but it only amounted, in most cases, to 2s. 6d. a week. The school teachers, to whom the Government were pledged in the way of automatic increases, were cut out entirely. No man in the neighbourhood of £3 or £2 a week was getting an increase. He did not think an Executive minute had been used once to get a lowly paid man an increase. The Premier was simply misrepresenting the state of affairs—distorting the facts. He gave them an assurance here, and the people outside a distinct promise, that there would be no increases, and he had broken that promise. He had fooled the people outside and also attempted to fool the Committee. According to the Estimates, increases were given, and Mr. Gall had been increased from £600 to £800, Mr. Gordon Graham from £580 to £800, and Mr. Board from £550 to £700. It was an outrage on the lower paid officers and on the railway servants, who could not get their classification increases, as well as juniors in the teaching service.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. FIELLY: The Premier, in passing, mentioned all these matters. The girls in the Government Printing Office were in receipt of low salaries, and were almost starving. The Commissioner for Railways was getting an increase of £250, and if they divided that by twelve it would give an increase to twelve people. He was satisfied that the Premier had committed a distinct breach of faith. His assurances could not be relied on; they were false from A to Z.

The PREMIER: Once more the hon. member was wrong; it was rare he ever was right, and happily he was estimated by the public at a certain standard. The hon. member had said he could not find an Executive minute where underpaid officers getting £3 and £2 a week had got an increase. There was a messenger in the Department of Public Instruction raised from £150 to £160; Moffatt, the watchman, from £130 to £140; the clerk of petty sessions at Ayr, from £130 to £140; Mr. Jack, an inspector of factories, £150 to £160; and another officer from £160 to £180.

Mr. HUXHAM: No one had a higher appreciation of Mr. Henderson than he had, and the session before last he had spoken about him in the highest terms.

The TREASURER: You urged an increase for him?

Mr. HUXHAM: Yes, and he got it. What he wanted to protest against was that officers who were receiving reasonably large salaries were getting continuous increases, and yet the lower paid juniors in the service were overlooked. As an assurance was given by the Government that no increases would be awarded this year, he expected the Government to abide by that decision, and for that reason he joined in the protest by members of the Opposition against the breach of principle of increasing the salaries of some highly paid officers. The automatic increases should have received the first consideration, and the refusal to grant those increases was an act of repudiation by the Government. There should be no increase given to any officer when the railway servants and other officers did not receive their automatic increases. Therefore, much as he appreciated the services of Mr. Henderson, he should vote against his increase.

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Mr. E. B. C. CORSER (*Maryborough*): He understood from the Minister that this increase was given to Mr. Henderson some five or six months before the 30th June last, before there was any sign of war or any idea of stopping automatic increases. He would not be in favour of any increases to highly paid officers after the 1st of July last, without paying automatic increases, but the increase in the present case was made long before that, and made, probably, because of what had been said by members in the House. They would not now be justified in depriving that officer of his increase granted in January or February last. He was sorry that the Government had not been able to honour the agreement with reference to automatic increases. At the same time, he must say that he knew a number of men in the railway service who were quite satisfied, on account of the war, to let their increases stand over for a time, provided that no one else received an increase. Personally, he thought the best solution of the difficulty would have been to have struck a rate all round, so that all public servants would be treated alike, and pay automatic increases less such reduction.

Mr. HUNTER (*Martinao*) said he opposed this increase, because the Government had thought fit to repudiate the agreement entered into with the junior officers of the service and had increased the salaries of more highly paid officers by Executive minute. They were no more bound in honour to continue to pay those increases than they were to pay the automatic increases, which were due under a distinct agreement between the officers and the Government. Some of the young men and young women who entered the service under such agreements were very poorly paid. He knew cases where they were not getting enough money to pay their board and clothe themselves. Yet those young persons were refused increases which were promised when they entered the service, while more highly paid officials were granted increases. Why should one portion of the service—and that the young and underpaid portion—suffer, when other officers were not suffering at all? It was distinctly unfair, and was not honest treatment of the young persons concerned. For that reason he should oppose the increase now under review.

Mr. FINELLY: The Premier thought to justify himself by quoting three or four officials who received £10 increases by Executive minute, but he did not give any explanation of the fact that men in the receipt of £400 a year were granted increases. Mr. Gall, Mr. Graham, Mr. Board, and the Commissioner for Railways received an increase of £1,000 among them, but junior officers in the service, who were getting promotion as far as work was concerned through elder men dropping out, were not given increases. He would not give any individual, particularly a man with a large salary, an increase at the present time. The fact that Mr. Graham went into the Under Secretary's office was not sufficient to justify it. If the work were graded so that it would always carry a certain wage, he would not object to it, but these men were highly paid whose work was graded. When Mr. Graham became Under Secretary he received an increase of £220; the Premier could not explain it. He attempted to sidestep the argument by mentioning a few cases where a few paltry pounds were given to different

men who were receiving lower salaries. This was really the low-wage Government, and it refused to give increases to the lower paid servants; refused to give them the opportunity of getting married and settling down and becoming good citizens. It was the men getting £600 a year for whom they had to be apologetic there. He did not care what any hon. member thought about Mr. Graham and Mr. Board getting their increases; he objected to it, more particularly as the juniors—the railway men and the teachers—were not getting their automatic increases. To give an increase of £250 a year to the Commissioner for Railways was an outrage, and the Premier had been guilty of deliberate evasion in not mentioning his name. The Premier knew himself that that was the point that wanted explaining—why Mr. Graham and Mr. Board and the Commissioner for Railways and others in the higher paid positions got increases, not how they gave a few £10 increases to lower paid men by Executive minute.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Marrumba*): Every member in the House knew that when certain salaries were mentioned in connection with different departments and somebody said that it was too little, the Minister would sometimes say, "Very well; I will go into the matter and, if it is possible, I will give him an increase." And that had been done in connection with this particular vote. He understood that this increase had been paid since last January. He was glad to see that one member of the Labour party was prepared to say that the Under Secretary for Public Lands was entitled to his increase in a similar position.

Mr. HUXHAM: Why did you not give the Commissioner for Railways £2,500, which Mr. Thallon was getting?

Mr. FORSYTH: If the hon. member thought that £2,500 was too much for a man at the head of a business with a capital of £35,000,000, then their opinions on the matter were somewhat different. As a matter of fact, £200 or £300, or even £500 or £1,000, was neither here nor there in the case of a man who had absolute charge of the whole of the administrative power of the Railway Department of Queensland. There were any number of men in business in Brisbane who were getting equally as much, and with capital not one-tenth as great as that of the Railway Department. If this increase had been given since July, he would say, "By all means, knock it out." But this was a case where a man had the salary for over six months prior to the war. The question was, whether hon. members wanted the policy of giving increases, after members had drawn attention to them in the House, to be continued.

Mr. HAMILTON: Can you remember any hon. member advocating that this officer should get an increase?

Mr. FORSYTH: One hon. member said that he got up and advocated that Mr. Henderson should get an increase. The fact of the matter was that the Opposition's move was all political fireworks. When he spoke on the Financial Statement, he compared the salaries paid during the years when the Labour party was in power with those paid last year, and there was an enormous increase. Any hon. member could see his remarks in "Hansard," and he challenged anyone to show that a single item was

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wrong. He would ask any reasonable man to consider whether the Liberal party, which had been in power during the last four or five years, had not increased the salaries of the lower paid officers infinitely more than governments who were in power before. What did the hon. member for Gregory do when the wages were much lower than they were now—in the years from 1903 to 1908? How many of them got up then to advocate increases? He would like to see all the lower paid officers get still higher salaries, but this was not the time to do it. Every hon. member knew that they must be affected to a very large extent by the war, and the same thing applied to the whole of Australia. But so soon as normal times came again, not only should they get their automatic increases, but all the lower paid men wanted a lift up, and he hoped that they would get it. When they could afford to give it to them, they should do so. (Laughter.) Hon. members laughed, but they knew that what he said was true.

Mr. THEODORE: Eight shillings a day, when it is 9s. 2d. in New South Wales.

Mr. FORSYTH: The question was, how much was it five years ago, when some of them were getting from 6s. to 7s. a day? If, after discussion, it appeared that it was the wish of the House that a man should get a higher salary, was it to be understood that that man should get the increase [4.30 p.m.] from the 1st January following, or was he to wait till the 1st of June, when the next Estimates were framed, before getting his increase? If that was to be distinctly understood, then the Committee would know where they were. He would ask the Committee, honestly and sincerely, to go through "Hansard" and see for themselves what increases had been made during the last five or six years, and then they would be satisfied that the Liberal Government had, at least, done something to improve the conditions of the lower grades in the public service.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS reminded the Committee that they were not considering the Estimates of the whole public service of Queensland. It seemed to him that members on both sides had drifted into a discussion of the Railway Estimates and the Lands Estimates, and the Secretary for Public Lands and Secretary for Railways would have no opportunity of discussing their Estimates. There was one specific vote before the Committee—"Inspection of Machinery"—and he respectfully submitted that members should confine themselves to that particular vote.

Mr. HAMILTON said they were discussing a principle, and not a mere £20 increase to Mr. Henderson.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is an amendment before the Committee.

Mr. HAMILTON: They were discussing the question of giving an increase to one individual and not to others, and the hon. member for Murrumba referred to the salaries now paid as compared to those paid in 1908. The conditions were quite different now, as in 1908 the country was only recovering from a serious depression, and increases were being given each year. How many strikes had occurred in the Railway Department and in other departments before those increases were given? There had been strikes all over the State, and the increases in the various departments were

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due to organisation on the part of the workers. When one public officer was shifted to a higher position rendered vacant through death or otherwise, it was not an increase in the ordinary sense. He had nothing to complain of in regard to the salaries to Mr. Board and Mr. Graham, as they were appointed to different positions and were only getting the salaries that their predecessors got, which was quite right. But it could not be said that that was the case with some of the other officers who were getting a £50 increase, nor was it the case in regard to the vote under discussion. He agreed with the member for Murrumba that it was time the Committee did understand whether the Minister or the House was going to control the public purse. When any member of the Committee advocated an increase to a public servant, that was an instruction to the Minister to recommend that increase when the Estimates for the next financial year were being considered, but it seemed that, immediately the Estimates were passed, Ministers could, by Executive minute, increase salaries without the sanction of the Committee. Could anyone say that any hon. member had advocated an increase to the Surveyor-General, or any of those in the higher ranks who were getting big increases? He had never heard any member of the Committee advocate increases in those cases, and in cases where hon. members had advocated an increase to some poor devil who was getting a mere pittance, no recommendation had been made. The Treasurer said he had distributed a certain amount between forty different women in his department, and he (Mr. Hamilton) would like to know how much it came to per capita. He would guarantee that the men to whom he had referred were each getting more than the forty widows were getting amongst them. It was a wrong thing to give some of the highly paid members of the public service increases when they could not ratify the obligations they were under to give automatic increases to the juniors in the service. He knew one girl—and he supposed there were hundreds of similar instances—in the Education Department, who was getting something like 9s. 6d. a week. That girl could not live if her parents did not provide her with board and lodging. She had been looking forward to getting about 15s. a week this year, and yet she was not getting one penny increase. That was repudiation, and if anybody should get consideration at a time like this it was those who were just getting a few paltry shillings a week. These who were getting £600 or £700 a year could look after themselves; and it was apparent that they had plenty of friends on the other side to look after their interests. It was not right to say members of the Opposition were trying to make political capital out of the matter; all they wished was to expose an injustice, and it was an injustice that required all the exposure members of the Committee could give it.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*) appreciated the splendid service a man like Mr. Henderson was able to give to the State. As a matter of fact, if he had his way, and the State could afford it, he would give a man in Mr. Henderson's position £500 a year. Some two or three years ago he (Mr. Barber) put up a strong advocacy on behalf of the inspectors in that department, but while so many young teachers and others were being paid such a low rate of wage he sub-

mitted it was wrong to give even Mr. Henderson an increase. If the State was in such a position that it was not able to give the automatic increases all round, the first to be paid increases should be low-paid members of the service. There were a lot of lad porters in the Railway Department getting about 12s. 6d. a week. Frequently they were sent away from home, and their parents had to contribute from 2s. 6d. to 5s. a week for their board and lodging. That was what the Opposition condemned, and it was condemned by the Treasurer himself in 1912. On page 1966 of "Hansard" for 1912, in reply to several hon. members, and especially the hon. member for Buranda, the hon. gentleman said—

"If hon. members would look at the Estimates they would notice that the increases this year were from £10 to £30, Mr. Henderson receiving a rise of £30, and the other inspectors £10 each. He quite recognised that the salary in question must seem small for the duties associated with the office, and he could only say—without making any comparison between one officer or another—that the matter would receive the earliest consideration of the Minister. In saying that, he wanted to be quite plain. Hon. members would recognise that it was neither desirable, nor was it generally done, after the House had voted a distinct amount, to increase the amount between now and the next Estimates. Some hon. member might next year say he had made a promise which he had not carried out."

If it was wrong in 1912 to grant any officer an increase after Parliament had appropriated a certain amount for his salary, then it was equally wrong at the beginning of this year. The Government were doing a great injustice in withholding the automatic increases. Admitting that revenue had fallen off owing to the war and other causes, the State had distinctly pledged itself to pay the young people who entered the service certain rates, and in failing to carry out the compact the Government were guilty of a dishonourable act. The Treasurer made a great deal out of the fact that the office cleaners in the public buildings had been given increases. But what did they amount to? Two shillings a week. He supposed it was this large increase that enabled those women to go in troops and pay a guinea for seats in the theatre during the last twelve months. Two or three years ago, when the Government gave the police an extra 3d. or 6d. a day, totalling £12,000 or £14,000 in the aggregate, the hon. gentleman and Government supporters made a great song about it; but it was spread over such a large number of men that it was a mere decimal increase to the individual. No hon. member appreciated Mr. Henderson's work more than he did, but, under the circumstances, even Mr. Henderson should not have been given an increase when there were so many public servants who were not receiving a living wage.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): was shocked at the hon. member for Gregory saying that, when he was in power, the Government had no money to spend.

Mr. HAMILTON: We never were in power.

HON. R. PHILP: He and his party at one time had a majority of thirty-five on the

Government side, and could do what they liked. In three years they accumulated £600,000 in surpluses, sweating the public servants in order to do so.

Mr. THEODORE: Didn't you retrench them?

HON. R. PHILP: He never had £600,000 in surpluses. His sin was that he paid away more than he got in. Why, the hon. member's Government appointed a commission of three further to sweat the public servants, and one of their recommendations was that a typist getting £52 per annum should be reduced to £50. And now the hon. member rose in his indignation and talked about the lower paid public servants. It was all nonsense for the hon. member to say that his Government would have paid more if they had had it. In the three years from 1905 to 1908 they had surpluses amounting to £600,000—all taken out of the public servants by the Labour Government.

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*) was surprised at the hon. member for Townsville. He expected to hear something interesting when the hon. member rose, but evidently he was trying to supplement what the hon. member for Murrumba said about what the Labour party did when they were in power. The hon. member for Murrumba must have thought he was addressing his clerks in the back yard and asking them not to join an industrial union because they might do something that would be injurious to his business. He noticed that there was a reduction on the Estimates of something like £130,000 this year as compared with last year. It had also been stated that it was necessary to curtail expenses. He understood from the Secretary for Public Works that the increases shown on the Estimates were advocated last year, and there was some mention of meat inspectors.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I never mentioned anything of the kind.

Mr. GILDAY: The Premier mentioned them. There was no doubt that he (Mr. Gilday) advocated increases to the meat inspectors, but that did not justify increases appearing for them on this year's Estimates, after the Government distinctly stated that there would be no increases at all. If it was right to give an increase to Mr. Henderson, then it must be equally right to give an increase to every other public servant who was advocated an increase in his salary by hon. members during the passage of the last Estimates. If that system was adopted throughout, then a very large number of public servants would get increases. He did not say that the increases that had been given were not legitimate, so far as the remuneration itself was concerned, but the channel through which they were given was illegitimate. It was not right for any Government to act in that way, and the sooner they rectified actions of that kind the better it would be for the State. He did not see why they should deal with the Estimates at all, if the Executive Council had the power to give increases other than those passed by the House. He strongly objected to the procedure adopted by the Government, because, if it were understood that there were to be no increases, then no one was justified in getting any increases.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): The desire of hon. members opposite to get up and talk on the

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amendment showed that their armour was being pierced in a weak spot. The Government had said that they were not giving increases on account of the war, yet they found on the Estimates that the amount required for certain officers was larger than that of previous officers, and they were told the rises were given by Executive minute, in pursuance of an agreement made before the war began. Were not the automatic increases for public servants expected in pursuance of an agreement made before the war? They were just as much in pursuance of an agreement as the increases given to the higher paid officers. There was a very big principle at stake in the amendment. The Government had demonstrated their incapacity to face the position with which they were confronted when the war broke out. They should have faced the position fairly and squarely, and allowed the automatic increases that were to be granted in pursuance of the agreement made with these lower paid officers, and then, if necessary—and only if necessary—strike a rate on the whole service by way of a reduction. He did not think any good purpose could be served by the Government or their supporters rising in their places in a somewhat angry manner and pointing to what took place six years ago. They alleged that a Labour Government was in power then, but there was never a Labour Government in power in Queensland except for a few days.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The majority of the Government's supporters were Labour men.

Mr. RYAN: It was a coalition, and the hon. gentleman would understand that no portion of a coalition could have its own way. That was the very basis of the coalition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The majority could get its own way.

Mr. RYAN: A majority of the House could get its own way, but not necessarily a majority of a particular party. There were two parties—a Labour party and the Morgan party—and the very nature of the thing made it necessary to have a give-and-take—to compromise. No doubt there was a good deal of compromise when that coalition was effected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I thought the policy of the Labour party was, "No compromise."

Mr. RYAN: They thought it was better to have the Morgan Government in power and get the adult franchise passed, rather than have the Morgan and Philp parties in power and the Labour party in Opposition.

Mr. MURPHY: The coalition did good work for Queensland.

Mr. RYAN: He admitted that they did good work for Queensland in regard to the franchise, the Workers' Compensation Act, and one or two other things. It would not avail the Government to-day to refer to what took place six years ago, or to refer to what was done in New South Wales, because the circumstances might be entirely different. The supporters of the Government were fond of referring to what was done six years ago, or to what was done thousands of miles away. The people of Queensland, and the public servants of Queensland, were more interested in what was being done to-day. The question was, whether the Government's

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policy to-day was a right or wrong policy? He thought it was a wrong policy. It was for members opposite to stand by that policy or not. His (Mr. Ryan's) opinion on the matter was so strong that he thought that the action of the Government with regard to the public servants was sufficient to shift them from office. If a vote were taken on this matter, it should be sufficient to remove the Government from office, because the Government had failed to carry out the agreement they had entered into before the war. If that were done, and it was found necessary to have a saving, it should be in proportion to the whole of the salaries paid to the whole public service.

Mr. BOWMAN: It was clear repudiation.

Mr. RYAN: That the automatic increases were not paid was repudiating an agreement, and if it was possible to repudiate the automatic increases, they could also repudiate the Executive minute increases.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not think that the hon. gentleman is in order.

Mr. RYAN: He was quite in order. He was talking on a matter of policy. He was not going to have his remarks confined as the Secretary for Public Works would like to have them confined.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The question is the reduction of the vote.

Mr. RYAN: It was not the £20 that was concerning him, but the policy of the Government. The Government had not faced the position, so far as the lower paid public servants were concerned, in a way in which a competent Government would have faced it. There was no doubt that the amendment was a vote of want of confidence in the Government, and, if it were carried, he could see nothing for it but for the Government to resign, because it would be a condemnation of the Government's policy. They heard the hon. member for Maryborough express the view that the automatic increases ought to have been given, and then, perhaps, they should reduce the whole of the salaries of the public service. It would now remain for the hon. member for Maryborough to show the public servants that he had the courage of his convictions, by voting for the amendment. He regarded the matter as a very important one, and it was one which would be regarded as important by the people generally and the public servants in particular.

Mr. THEODORE: The Treasurer, in reply to criticisms from the Opposition, said that the Government had at least not reduced wages; that if they had not increased men in the lower grades of the service, they had not reduced the wages. He contended that they had reduced the wages of men on railway construction works in the Northern district. The ruling rate of wages in the district in which the Millaa Millaa railway was being built had been nothing less than 10s. for the last three years, and the Government started the works there by paying 9s. a day. The rate of wages awarded by Judge Macnaughton for quarrymen at Townsville was 11s. 4d. a day, but the rate paid by the Government when they started the Townsville to Ingham railway was 9s. a day. Was not that a reduction? The rate of wages on surface work at the Cloncurry Mines, similar to work done on railways—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS rose to a point of order. The question

before the Committee was the reduction of a certain vote by £20. The hon. member was discussing the wages paid to railway men, and that, he submitted, was not in order.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Chillagoe is not in order. I hope he will confine himself to the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. THEODORE: He was merely replying to an argument used by the Minister for Works himself, and the hon. gentleman's case must be very weak if it would not stand replying to. It showed that the case for the Opposition had been amply proved. One would be sorry if the Committee did anything which might injure Mr. Henderson's promotion, to which he was undoubtedly entitled, and there was nothing intended in that way when the amendment was moved. Public officers who were entitled to increases and promotion should receive them when the state of things permitted, but no class of public servants or individual should get preference over the other.

Question—That the sum of £10,900 only be granted (*Mr. Theodore's amendment*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYE, 24.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Fuxham
.. Barber	.. Kiewan
.. Bertram	.. Land
.. Bowman	.. Larcobabe
.. Coyne	.. Lennon
.. Fihelly	.. McCormack
.. Foley	.. Murphy
.. Gilday	.. O'Sullivan
.. Gillies	.. Payne
.. Hamilton	.. Ryan
.. Harlaere	.. Theodore
.. Hunter	.. Winstanley
<i>Tellers: Mr. Hunter and Mr. Murphy.</i>	

NOES, 28.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Forsyth
.. Appel	.. Grant
.. Archer	.. Gunn
.. Barnes, W. H.	.. Hodge
.. Bobbington	.. Luke
.. Blair	.. Macrossan
.. Bouchard	.. Fagot
.. Bridges	.. Petrie
.. Caine	.. Philp
.. Cosser, B. H.	.. Swayne
.. Cosser, E. B. C.	.. Tolmie
.. Crawford	.. Trout
.. Denham	.. White
.. Douglas	.. Williams
<i>Tellers: Mr. Archer and Mr. Bouchard.</i>	

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. May. No—Mr. Cribb.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question put.

Mr. COYNE pointed out that there were about the same number of clerks as last year, and still there was a reduction of £90. He supposed it was the old style of getting at the lower paid servants again. They would be told that somebody was shifted and a cadet put in his place.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is exactly the position.

Mr. COYNE: If a person was shifted to do another person's work, he should get the same salary. There was a reduction of £500 in travelling expenses, postages, telegrams, and incidentals, and there was also a reduction of £300 in railway fares and freights,

printing, stationery, etc. What benefit was it to get motor-cars for inspection work if there was not a greater saving in travelling expenses and railway fares?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In those two votes there is a reduction of £800.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; but the Minister had told the Committee that the department now employed a better means of locomotion, so that there should be a considerable saving in those items. But even if the motor-cars were doing the good work the Minister said they were doing, the cost of tyres and repairs and upkeep in connection with those four motor-cars would amount to the price of one motor-car in twelve months, so that he did not see that the department were effecting any saving by going in for those motor-cars.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Warrego had evidently not grasped the position. He advocated the use of motor-cars because previously inspectors on duty in the back country were often under an obligation to station owners and others for means to get about in order to inspect machinery. Now they were able to get about in one of the department's motor-cars, and were able to make a number of inspections per annum instead of one or two, and in addition they were absolutely independent. He did not wish to insinuate that station owners or anyone who had machinery to inspect would do anything improper to influence an inspector who had ridden 70 or 80 miles to perform his duty, but he thought the inspector should not be under a compliment to anyone, especially to an interested party. A man who could go out "on his own" was in a very much stronger position than a man who was dependent upon an interested party for means of conveyance. The amount for travelling expenses, telegrams, etc., was reduced from £3,500 to £3,000, and the amount for railway fares and freights, printing, and stationery from £1,000 to £700, so that on those two items there was a saving of £800.

Mr. COYNE: As against the cost of the motor-cars.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; but it would not be a fair thing to write off the whole cost of the motor-cars in one year. Three cars were imported, and one had been purchased locally, and it had been found that the use of motor-cars effected a considerable saving of time, and that the inspection was very much better done than it could be if the inspectors had to travel about by trams and other public conveyances. The Education Department had also found the use of motor-cars a great advantage, and in another department which he controlled they found that a considerable saving of time was effected by the use of those cars.

Mr. PAYNE: There will be if the cars are reliable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The cars used by the Works Department were exceedingly satisfactory as far as he knew; they were purchased by the Under Secretary in the old country, and were doing excellent work.

Mr. FOLEY (*Mundingburra*): When the hon. member for Warrego referred to a reduction of £30 in the amount for the salaries of clerks, the Minister interjected that the

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reduction was explained by the employment of a cadet in the place of one of the former clerks. When the Home Secretary's Estimates were under consideration, it was argued that Mr. Gall ought to get the salary which was previously paid to Mr. Ryder, but he (Mr. Foley) pointed out that Mr. Chuter, who was appointed to Mr. Gall's position, did not get Mr. Gall's salary.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will keep to the question before the Committee.

Mr. FOLEY: He only mentioned the fact to show that the Government did not follow that principle when dealing with the lower paid officers of the service. In this vote there was a reduction of £30 in the amount for the clerks. If the clerk who was promoted to the vacancy caused by the promotion or removal of another clerk was fit to fill that position, then he was fit to take the salary attached to the position. He was sorry to see the hon. member for Townsville get so heated in his remarks. It was an old habit of the Government when that hon. member was in power himself, and he remembered that on one occasion he gave three men in the Railway Department in Townsville £100 a year each—the Traffic Manager, the Maintenance Engineer, and the Locomotive Engineer—at the same time that he reduced the pay of all the other railway servants.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question.

Mr. FOLEY: He was just saying that this was an old game, and an old game that he did not agree with. He thought that before the highly paid officers got their increases the lower paid officers should get consideration. There were many persons in the Government employ who could scarcely pay their way and keep up appearances on the salaries they were getting. It was all very well to tell them that these particular rises had been agreed upon early in the year. The automatic increases had been agreed upon ever since those servants who were entitled to them had been in the employ of the Government, and when they did not get it one year it threw them back. This Government told them that they were not reducing wages.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have had to call the hon. member to order several times. He is not in order in discussing the general policy of the Government.

Mr. FOLEY: He was discussing the reduction or otherwise of officers in the vote.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be in order if he does that; but he will not be in order in discussing the general policy of the Government.

Mr. FOLEY: He did not know that he was discussing the general policy of the Government. He was discussing the payment of salaries.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was discussing the policy of payment of salaries adopted by the Government and not this vote.

Mr. FOLEY: He thought that other hon. members who had spoken had gone all round the compass too. He was only elaborating his argument, perhaps, when he pointed to other departments, but it was only to show

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that it applied to them also. He was referring to the reduction of the salaries of five clerks from £530 to £500. The Treasurer, by way of interjection, replied to the hon. member for Warrego that the reduction was caused by a cadet being put in the position of one of the clerks, who had been promoted or shifted. He only said that because—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has said it half a dozen times already.

Mr. FOLEY: He wanted to press it because the Chairman did not seem to understand what he was driving at. (Laughter.) That cadet should get the salary due to the position he had filled.

HON. R. PHILP: His friend the hon. member for Mundingburra was very narrow-minded; he was a very small man in mind as well as in body. He was very like a man in England—a member of Parliament and a Minister—who once said that no man living was worth £500. That man was at present drawing £5,000 a year, and when he was asked where it went to, he said, "Ask Mrs. Buras." The hon. member had told the Committee about three men in Townsville who got £100 a year each. He forgot to say that they did a great deal of extra work. Those men were Mr. Evans, Mr. Minehan, and Mr. Pemberton. They were then living in Townsville, looking after the Northern railways.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. R. PHILP: He was only refuting the statement of the hon. member for Mundingburra. Mr. Evans had to go out to Normanton and to Bowen and Mackay to inspect. He did double the work, and saved a lot of money.

Mr. FOLEY: Did you not reduce the men 12½ per cent. at the same time?

HON. R. PHILP: He did not reduce any of the men 12½ per cent. He reduced them according to salary; men getting over £100 a year were reduced 5 per cent., and so on. He put it on a most equitable basis.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not proceed further on those lines.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member for Mundingburra made a statement and the Chairman should have pulled him up.

The CHAIRMAN: I did call the hon. member to order.

HON. R. PHILP: After he had made it. (Laughter.)

Mr. GILDAY: He did not wonder that the hon. member wanted to justify himself. When he was Premier of the State he led the low-wage Government. He was the man who introduced the poll tax.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. GILDAY: He put a poll tax on everyone, even on the man getting 4s. 6d. a day.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: My point of order is that the hon. member is not discussing the question before the Committee. He is discussing the poll tax, which has nothing whatever to do with it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is decidedly out of order, and I must remind him that when I get up to call him to order he must obey my call.

Mr. GILDAY: He had no desire whatever to disagree with the Chairman's ruling. He thought that the hon. member used arguments against members on that side for which there was no justification, and it was only right that they should retaliate. He could not rise in his place without saying what the Labour party had done. The lower paid people to-day were really asked to subscribe to every mortal thing in connection with the war, and yet they were told that owing to the war, there was no justification for their giving rises. He attended a patriotic carnival run by the Australian Natives' Association on Saturday last.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out that the Australian Natives' Association carnival has nothing to do with the vote before the Committee. I must ask the hon. member to deal with the vote before the Committee.

Mr. GILDAY: He was going to show the necessity of giving the lower paid people better pay, when they found that very nearly everything appertaining to the war was thrown on to the shoulders of the workers. He merely rose for the purpose of expressing resentment at the remarks of the hon. member for Townsville.

Question put and passed.

LABOUR AND FACTORIES.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that £7,650 be granted for "Labour and Factories." There was a decrease of £200 in connection with the conveyance of labour, railway and steamer fares, and a decrease of £10 in connection with labour agents, and an increase of £30 in regard to inspectors. When speaking on [5.30 p.m.] the matter, the Premier had mentioned that there was a small increase to Mr. Jack, who, when appointed, was told that his salary would be so much, and that after serving a certain number of months he would receive an increase of £10, which he had got.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*) said he would like some information as to what instructions local agents had in regard to breaches of the Act? The inspector at Charters Towers was a very energetic and painstaking officer and did his work equitably, but he was not at liberty to prosecute without getting permission from the Chief Inspector.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Chief Inspector cannot give permission at all; the Minister is responsible.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That was all right as far as it went, but when people were guilty of breaches of the Act, and recognised that fact, and stated that they were going to plead guilty when brought before the court, it should be quite sufficient to fine them for a breach of the Act, without compelling them to pay £2 2s. solicitor's expenses as well. Of course, if people were going to defend the case, then the inspector must do the same.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The instructions were that when anyone

notified that he was going to plead guilty, no solicitor should be employed, and while the hon. member was speaking, a memorandum had been handed to him (Mr. Barnes) from the officer in charge, pointing out that that was the practice. He was very glad to know that the hon. member appreciated the inspector in Charters Towers, the more so, because he was an officer who had risen from the ranks. The officer in question at one time was a messenger in the Department of Public Works, but he had proved himself a capable man and was promoted to the position of inspector. In order to remove any doubt with regard to the policy pursued in connection with prosecutions where people pleaded guilty, he would see that further instructions were given. The hon. member would at once recognise that if people did not propose to plead guilty, as many points were taken, it was highly necessary that the Crown should be represented by a solicitor.

Mr. HUXHAM understood that there had been a reduction of £10, as far as the salary of the lady inspector was concerned, and it was a case of the officer not receiving the salary of the position to which she was appointed. He maintained that the position should carry the salary. As the population of the State increased, they must expect the lower grade officers to go up higher, and there was no reason why they should not get the higher salary when they got the position. They did not say to a judge, when appointed, "£2,000 a year is the salary, but we will start you at £1,500." Then again, a member of Parliament when first elected got £300 a year, just the same as those who had been members for years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He quite recognised the principle the hon. member had advocated, but he would be able to explain the position to the entire satisfaction of the Committee. They had in the department a lady of the name of Smith. Miss Smith had been in the department for many years, and she became very proficient in her duties. It would be at once admitted that, in a department such as the Department of Labour, no matter how good a newcomer might be, it could not be expected for one moment that she would be right up to all the requirements of the department; and, indeed, they required a good deal of training in order to make them fit for their work, so the reduction was in no way a reflection on those joining the department. There were some services where there must be a maximum salary, and, if the hon. member knew all the circumstances, he would know that a fair deal had been given to every member of the service. Two of the lady inspectors were practically newcomers. One came from another branch of the service, but she was anxious to get into that branch of the service and was very glad of the opportunity of availing herself of the salary provided.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*) wished to draw the attention of the Minister to the case of an inspector recently in the employ of the Factories and Shops Department, at Ipswich. He was dealt with by the Public Service Board and dismissed for drunkenness. The officer in question had been in the service since 1890, and, though he believed this was the second time such a charge had been made against him, the police magistrate and the clerk of petty sessions at Ipswich

Mr. Bowman.]

testified that he had done his work well. He (Mr. Bowman) had seen officers very high in the service so full that they could hardly walk, but not one word was said about them, and he considered it was unfair to make "fish of one and flesh of another." If this man had been reprimanded, he thought it would have met the case. The man had been recently married, and it was not likely that he would have much chance of getting into another department, and, having regard to his previous good service, he trusted the Minister would reconsider the case and give him another chance. He believed that the man admitted in a letter which he had written to the Minister that he was not right on the occasion in question. He did not know whether there was any friction between him and the Chief Inspector, but, taking into consideration the fact that in a vote they had recently passed there was one inspector who, if he had his due, would have been out of the service long ago, he hoped the Minister would give this man another chance.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was just as well to be frank in connection with anything that had been done by the Minister or by the department. Before he took charge of the Works Department, the officer referred to by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had been reprimanded by the then Minister, and he was told that, if he continued to behave as he had been doing, he would be dismissed. He promised to become an abstainer, and said that there would be no further cause of trouble. Repeatedly complaints had been made by his superior officers that he was not doing his work satisfactorily. To have an officer in a department like the Labour and Factories, who could not do his work properly, was a reflection upon everyone connected with the department. If the hon. member saw the record of the officer, he would see at once that the department could not retain an officer with such a record. So far as he (Mr. Barnes) knew, the service was a sober one, and, if it was represented to him that an officer was not capable of doing his duty through the excessive use of liquor, it was not his duty to see that the man became an abstainer, but it was clearly his duty—especially where a man had to inspect machinery and scaffolding, or work in connection with Labour and Factories—to see that that man was not any longer employed in the service. He regretted having to say that this man had had several opportunities and that his work was not at all satisfactory to the department. He hoped the hon. member would give him an opportunity of letting him see some of the records of this officer.

MR. BOWMAN: I shall be very glad to see them.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. member had been in his place, he would have acted precisely as he did, unless he wanted to make the department stink in the nostrils of the public. In a department that required the exercise of tact and care in administration, they could not afford to have a man who was not capable of looking after himself. He was quite prepared to give any man a chance, but this man had his chance and failed to take advantage of it. As the hon. member said, he might have some difficulty in obtaining another position, but he should have profited by his previous warnings.

[*Mr. Bowman.*]

MR. GILDAY: This department had very important work to do in seeing that all the industrial awards which had been made were carried out in their entirety, and he regretted very much that the work of administration was not carried out as it should be in some towns in the State. In most towns the inspectors were sympathetic, but in others they were not, and there were some unions which were not strong enough to enforce the observance of awards by their employers, and it was very hard on such unions. He wanted to bring some facts under the notice of the Minister, because they might enable him to investigate the charges he had to make. It was well known that the meat industry employees had a very strong organisation, and they sent periodically throughout Queensland an officer to see how the meat awards were carried out. This officer made a report, and he was prepared at any time to allow the Minister to see it. At Warwick and Mackay it had been brought under the notice of the inspectors that there had been breaches of the awards in connection with the industry. The unfortunate part about these reports was that as soon as an employee gave information about a breach of the award taking place, the very next day the employer would have possession of that information and he would go to the employee and ask him what he meant by making that report against him. As soon as an employee reported an infringement of the Act, the inspector went straight and told the employer. The inspector had no right to do that; in fact, there was a penalty provided in the Act for anyone doing that kind of thing. No inspector had a right to divulge information that was given to him by the employees. There were some complaints received about the reports having to go through the head office in Brisbane, instead of being dealt with where they were made. When complaints were made in different towns—Toowoomba, Emerald, and other places—the officers had to communicate with the head office in Brisbane before they could take action. The result often was that the employee would have left the district before proceedings could be taken. The whole onus of prosecuting an employer should be left with the inspectors in the different centres where the offences took place. Mr. Smith, the organiser of the Butchers' Union, recently visited Longreach, Barcardine, and Emerald, and he brought under the notice of the inspector at Emerald a breach of the meat industry award. The inspector was also the clerk of petty sessions, and he refused to take any action against the employer. The official of the Butchers' Union prosecuted the man himself, with the result that he was fined for committing a breach of the award, and in addition he had to make up the amounts that he had short paid in wages, which in some cases amounted from 2s. 6d. per week to £1 7s. 6d. per week. It was a bad state of affairs when the local inspectors refused to take action, and if they all took up that attitude he could not see how justice could be obtained for the employee. The officials of the Butchers' Union were always ready to assist the inspectors so far as breaches of the award were concerned, and he knew of instances where other reputable employers also assisted them in laying before the inspectors instances where violations of the law had taken place. If that sort of thing happened where a strong body of organised men

was concerned, what must it be where the unorganised portion of the workers was concerned? That showed the necessity of having sympathetic administration from men who had humanitarian views so that they could bring about justice so far as the workers were concerned. In Emu Park, Yepoon, and Mount Chalmers there had been no change in the conditions since the award came into force. The men had to work on Sundays as well as every other day in the week, and the inspectors would not act. As the conditions were just the same at those places as they were before the award came into force, he hoped the Minister would look into them. At Laidley, when Organiser Smith brought certain matters under the notice of the acting sergeant there, the acting sergeant said he would not act on his advice at all, and he thought that a man who made a charge like Smith made against an employer ought to be in gaol. That was a poor way of treating matters of that kind. He had a report as to the working of the different awards throughout Queensland, and he would be pleased to give it to the Minister, as he thought he should have it before him. It was not often he made charges of this kind, and he only did it in order to have them investigated by the Minister. He hoped there would be better administration of the Wages Board Acts in the outside towns than there had been in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS rose to say that the matters mentioned by the hon. member would be looked into by him.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Kippel*) hoped the Minister would investigate the charges made by the hon. member for Ithaca, and also that he would look into charges made in connection with awards in Central Queensland. There had been serious complaints about violation of the engine-drivers and firemen's award in the Central-west which should be looked into.

Mr. BERTRAM hoped the Minister would reconsider the case of the man referred to by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. When he (Mr. Bertram) was secretary of a union, he had frequently come into contact with the man referred to, and he knew that he carried out his work in an efficient manner. He believed that the Secretary for Public Works was rather a fanatic on the question of temperance.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. BERTRAM: He did not want to do the Minister an injustice, but they knew that he was a strong advocate of teetotalism.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have never hesitated to say that I am a total abstainer, but I do not want to do an unfair thing to a man who does not see eye to eye with me. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BERTRAM: It seemed as if the Minister had done this man an injustice in that direction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Come along and see the book at the office.

Mr. BERTRAM: He would take an opportunity of doing that. He hoped that the man's case would be considered again, and that he would be reinstated, because it was difficult for him to get employment elsewhere after having been twenty-three or twenty-four years in this department.

Mr. THEODORE referred to the item put down for railway fares, which was made available for those persons who secured employment in some distant place and got a pass from the department to take them to their place of employment. The intention was a good one, but, unfortunately, it was somewhat restricted, and the regulations had been more restricted this year than hitherto. The argument was that very often men who got passes travelled to their destination, and did not go to that particular employment, and consequently the fare was lost to the department. Care had to be taken to prevent the department from being defrauded, but a great many men were thereby placed under a disability. A case came under his notice the week before last, where two men had work to go to at Bundaberg, on one of the sugar plantations; but the Department of Labour refused to give them a pass unless they could get a friend to guarantee them. But they had no friend here. He rang up Mr. Crowther, who, after considering the matter, treated it as a special case and gave them a pass, and he was informed by Mr. Crowther that the men had not been heard of again, and the department had lost the fare. The department made regulations to guard against fraud of this kind, but it made it pretty difficult for others who were honest to get passes to go to the places they had got work at unless they had got friends. In such cases as these it was better to pursue a man who committed a fraud and make an example of him. It was a reasonable thing that the Government should assist honest men to get to their employment, on the distinct understanding that the fare came out of their wages. The men should not be penalised because the department had been penalised in one or two instances, and the Minister should lay down a rule that no apparently genuine man should be turned down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said the policy of the department was a very liberal one—namely, that if any person applied for a railway pass, and was able to show that they had work to go to, the department would find the half of the fare; if the fare was £1, they only asked the man to give a guarantee for 10s. He appreciated the point which the hon. member for Chillagoe had raised, and he took it that if a man obtained the fare under false pretences it was a fair thing to pursue him, and the matter would receive very careful consideration. The department did not desire to penalise any man who was honest in seeking for work.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*) pointed out that the department had more effective machinery than an individual to follow up these men who obtained passes fraudulently, and they might employ the police for that purpose. He had an account now which he had received from the department for one of these passes, in connection with a case which had seemed to him at the time to be a genuine one. It was difficult for an honest man to get a pass on account of the suspicion caused by those who had taken the department down. He was glad to say that in the majority of cases which had come under his notice the men had returned their fares, but there had been a few wasters, and it was the duty of the department to follow up these wasters, and make it easier for the honest man.

Question put and passed.

Mr. Payne.]

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.
CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. W. Blair, Ipswich) moved that £7,475 be granted for "Chief Office." There was very little alteration in the vote. There was an apparent decrease of £10 in the salary of the chief messenger, which was not really a decrease. The explanation was that the chief messenger had been appointed from the head office to the position of chief bailiff of the District Court, and the junior messenger was promoted to his position. The amount for fees for the defence of poor prisoners was increased by £220, and the amount for fees for court shorthand writers from £100 to £250.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): He should like to know whether any more was spent on the defence of poor prisoners last year than the year before?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes.

Mr. HARDACRE: The sum of £130 was not a large sum to spend in twelve months. He had had a lively experience in connection with an effort he had made to get the department to use some of that money to defend a poor prisoner in a case in which the man was charged with attempting to obtain money by fraudulent pretences. On the surface, it seemed as if the evidence was very much against the defendant, but he knew the man and his peculiarities, and, after having interviewed him, he came to the conclusion that there might be a very simple explanation of the matter. The man had no means at all, and he (Mr. Hardacre) went to the Under Secretary to try and get some assistance for the defendant from the poor prisoners' defence fund, but could get nothing at all. When the case came on, the man was acquitted, or some doubt was raised by the prosecution, and the man walked out of court within five minutes of the trial. He was glad that the amount for the defence of poor prisoners was increased, and hoped the department would use the funds.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: When this vote was discussed last year, he made a promise that the matter would be seriously considered, and it was considered to the extent that, in addition to the appropriation of £130, an additional amount of £295 was obtained, thus making the whole expenditure £425. With regard to the case mentioned by the hon. member, he had no personal knowledge of it, but he could say that, when he was in the department, wherever there was a reasonable chance of a man raising a defence which would secure his liberty, he invariably granted him assistance, and that was the intention of the Act. But in justice to whoever was responsible for finally deciding the matter mentioned by the hon. member, he might say that the department first of all got a report from the police magistrate who heard the case, and if that report was strongly against the defendant, it hampered the department very much in their action.

Mr. FORSYTH: With regard to the statement of the hon. member for Leichhardt that a great deal more money might be expended on the defence of poor prisoners

[*Hon. J. W. Blair.*]

than was expended, he would point out that, in addition to the £130 voted last year, no less than £245 in addition was spent, making a total of £375. He could quite understand the department asking for £350 now, when £375 was expended last year.

Mr. RYAN noticed an amount of £300 set down for "legal expenses (civil business)," and should like to know what those expenses consisted of. Did they include fees to counsel, or what did they refer to?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Court fees.

Mr. RYAN: Was there any place where they would find the amount paid to counsel?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In the return I laid on the table.

Mr. RYAN: It was not on the Estimates?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No.

Mr. RYAN: There was another matter he should like to refer to. He should like to know what was the intention of the Government with regard to the appointment of a public trustee? That was a very necessary office to have established, and nothing seemed to have been done in that direction. Possibly the Minister might have some statement to make in regard to it. There was a great public demand for such an officer, and a great necessity for such an appointment being made. He would also like to know whether something could not be done as to the payment of small amounts in the Savings Bank in cases of intestacy. There had to be a wait of three months under the Act before the money was paid out. He knew of an instance which occurred only the other day, in which a person died leaving an amount of about £20 in the bank. He endeavoured to get the money out for the relative, and interviewed the Deputy Curator of Intestate Estates, who had no objection. But the manager of the Savings Bank was unable to do anything, although he (Mr. Ryan) was prepared to sign any document that might be necessary. He was told that if it had been under £10 it could have been done. The person happened to die before she signed the withdrawal form which had been sent to her, and her husband wanted to get the money, but could not do so, and had to go away without it. Apparently, the officers were justified under the Act, but still something should be done to shorten the period in cases where the money might be really necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The reason why the money could not be paid out was because of a precautionary period provided under the Savings Bank Act, and it was considered at the time the Act was passed that the period mentioned was a reasonable time to keep people waiting in order to see that everybody who had a claim against the estate had a chance to prove it. Undoubtedly, in cases, it worked hardship, but he believed that an exception was made now in cases up to about £20 for funeral expenses and other demands which had to be paid in priority of other claims. The only way he could see of dealing with the matter was to amend the Act, and it was very doubtful whether that would be wise. In the majority of cases it was really a safeguard. With regard to the public trustee, all he could tell the House was

that he had a Bill prepared to give effect to what the hon. member had discussed, but so far there had been no opportunity of introducing it. He promised to see whether the safeguard in the case of Savings Bank deposits could not be removed, but, personally, he did not think it could.

Mr. HAMILTON: Every year the question of the appointment of public trustees cropped up, and they got the same answer that the Minister had just given the House—that his intention was to introduce a measure if he could only get the opportunity. Where there was a will there was a way. There was an opportunity last year and again this year. But, of course, it was one of those measures that interfered with private enterprise. He believed that a measure of the kind had been very successful in New South Wales. They had a big staff in the Crown Law Office, and, he believed, a very capable staff, quite as able and just as competent as those in other States, to carry out the duties if they could only give them the opportunity to do so. And when they had a department with a competent staff, he held that they should put that staff to the very best use possible. The public trustee had been wanted for many, many years. It was one of those measures which should be brought in at the very beginning of the session, and they had had a lot of measures which could very well stand over until it was made law. The Government had time to bring in a Bill tampering with the franchise in order to make their position on the Treasury benches a little safer, but they had no time to deal with a measure that would be for the public weal and public good, and benefit thousands of persons in the community.

Mr. THEODORE: He would like to interrogate the Minister with regard to the increase provided for the Supreme Court judges' travelling expenses. Last year they were set down at £900, and this year they had increased to £1,000. He would like to know what was the average cost of the travelling of the judges.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It was found that the judges were travelling more latterly, because Mr. Justice Shand was away on twelve months' leave of absence, which necessitated Mr. Justice Lakin's going from Rockhampton, and, he supposed, necessitated also a re-division of the work. The judges had travelled on circuit 216 days, at the average cost of £3 10s. 4d. a day.

Mr. THEODORE pointed out that they had reduced the travelling expenses of the inspectors of machinery; and now they proposed to increase the travelling expenses of the judges.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Their expenses have not increased, but they are travelling more.

Mr. THEODORE: Was the average cost last year the same?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes, I think so.

Mr. THEODORE: The inspectors were necessary to look after machinery all over the State and see that it was safe, and, no doubt, they would be affected more by the increased cost of living than the judges. The judges ought to be as patriotic as other public servants who had to suffer as a conse-

quence of the war, and forego a little luxury during the time they were on circuit, which could be done without any great hardship to themselves and possibly result in a saving to the public Treasury.

Mr. FIEHELLY said he understood a circular was being sent round in the service asking for subscriptions to present the Under Secretary with a testimonial. He had no personal objection to Mr. Hall, as he was a very deserving officer, but if such a thing was mooted, or in the course of preparation, it was rather unfortunate at the present time, because the juniors in the service thought it necessary to subscribe to such a testimonial. They imagined they were under a handicap or might be submitted to hardship if they did not subscribe. Mr. Hall was getting £100 under the vote for the "Workers' Dwelling Act," and if such a circular was in course of preparation, or people had taken it up, he would suggest that it be discontinued. He had no personal feeling towards Mr. Hall, but on account of the unique circumstances, the young officers at the present time had no money to contribute. He understood Mr. Hall was one of the oldest servants in the service, and had completed his jubilee, and he (Mr. Fiehellly), in common with other members, was very proud of their public servants, but he did not think the present was an opportune time to carry out any scheme such as he had mentioned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He was informed that the Under Secretary had no knowledge of such a circular as that to which the hon. member had referred, but, at the same time, he (Mr. Blair) was informed by the chief clerk that a movement was on foot which had been originated by the various heads of the sub-departments to honour the Under Secretary on the attainment of his jubilee. That was all he knew with regard to the matter, but at the same time he would convey the opinion expressed by the hon. member to the Under Secretary.

Mr. FIEHELLY: His point of view had nothing to do with the pros and cons of the testimonial; he thought it was a very excellent thing, especially in the case of a man who had completed such a length of service, but he hoped, if Mr. Hall was going to be presented with a testimonial, that subscriptions would be confined to officers in receipt of over £300 a year.

Question put and passed.

COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £35,705 be granted for "Courts of Petty Sessions." There was an increase in the vote of £705, there being an increase in salaries of £830, and a decrease in connection with contingencies of £125. The increase took place from June, and were absolutely necessary on account of the death of Mr. Thomas Mowbray, third police magistrate at Brisbane, the retirement from the service of the police magistrate at Charleville, the retirement of the police magistrate of Cairns, and the appointment of a police magistrate at Cunnamulla. The retirement of those officers and others passing out through death had necessitated a readjustment and various promotions.

Hon. J. W. Blair.]

At thirty-five minutes past 7 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under Standing Order No. 11, I call upon the hon. member for Bremer, Mr. Cribb, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. CRIBB thereupon took the chair.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was under the impression that a court of petty sessions was going to be established at the Duchess, but there seemed to be no provision for it in the Estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is to be established. If the hon. member will look at the bottom of the page—45—he will see “and any other place where necessary, £1,800.”

Mr. HAMILTON: He was told by the department that as soon as ever the new police station was finished a court of petty sessions would be established at the Duchess. He had been given to understand that the building had been completed for some time, and, if so, it was up to the department to establish a court there at the earliest possible moment, as at the present time it was necessary to go 80 miles to Cloncurry. It would save a great deal of expense and inconvenience if a court was established at that place.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am assured that a court will be established there.

Mr. HAMILTON: The Committee had been told that there were no increases in that Department, and yet he noticed that the police magistrate at Barealdine was getting an increase of £50. Was that an increase granted by Executive minute or was it a transfer of an officer?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is a transfer.

Mr. FIELLILLY said a circular had been sent out by the Department of Justice asking police magistrates to inflict heavier sentences on those convicted of pilfering, and the Secretary for Public Instruction should have something to say on the matter. It seemed to him an extraordinary thing that a man who stole a pot of grease worth 6d. should get the savage sentence of six months without the option—a man who produced testimonials with regard to his character, going back for thirty odd years, showing that he was a most respectable citizen, and yet he got that savage sentence for stealing a pot of grease. The Chamber of Commerce evidently approached the Minister, and, at their instigation, the circular was sent. It was a most improper thing that the Justice Department could instruct the police magistrates in that respect, especially at the instigation of an association like the Chamber of Commerce. If they were going to have magistrates directed by the Minister or by the office, he did not know where it would end. He asked the question the other day about a man who stole 6s. 6d. worth of white lead and he got something like six months' hard labour without the option of a fine. The Department were endeavouring to make criminals of comparatively innocent men, while other men who adulterated milk and poisoned babies were fined a few pounds. In reply to his question, the Premier, for the Attorney-General, stated that the heavy sentences were inflicted with the intention of putting down pilfering. If that was so, it was time they tried hanging drunkards in order to stop drunkenness. If the Minister thought that heavy sentences were going to act as a preventive, he might as well adopt that prin-

[Mr. Stodart.

ciple straight away. A few years ago big firms were continually guilty of cheating the Customs, but the Department of Justice did not then suggest that heavy penalties should be inflicted upon the merchants who were guilty of that offence. Apparently, there were two sorts of law—justice for the rich man and law for the poor man. The poor man was sentenced to hard labour without the option; the rich man who cheated the Customs all the year round, or the chemist who went on selling kerosene oil as a patent purgative, was let off with a fine. There should be some attempt at uniformity in the matter. On 3rd November he asked the Premier the following questions:—

“1. Has it been brought under his notice that Mr. Eglinton, P.M., sentenced a man to three months' hard labour, without the option of a fine, for stealing one keg of lead valued at 6s. 3d.?”

“2. Has it been brought under his notice that Mr. Eglinton, P.M., committed a man to the higher court for stealing a case of herrings valued £1 13s. 1d.?”

“3. Is he aware that the reason given for these sentences is that pilfering is becoming more frequent?”

The Premier's answers were—

“1. Yes.

“2. Yes.

“3. Mr. Eglinton, the police magistrate, reports that pilfering from wharves and ships has increased to such an extent that he is satisfied the only punishment that will act as a deterrent is imprisonment; that he has in previous cases extended the provisions relating to first offenders, and in other cases fines have been inflicted, without any good result; and that he is informed that in one case a fine of £20 was subscribed within twenty-four hours by sympathisers.”

What had the fact that the money was subscribed to do with the meting out of justice? If the merchants of Brisbane had subscribed to pay the fine inflicted on the firm of Robert Reid and Company, who cheated the Customs several years ago, it would not have had any effect upon the police magistrate. Offenders should be dealt with entirely on their merits. In Brisbane there was altogether too much of police magistrates being partially instructed by the Department of Justice. It was also well known that a police magistrate would see the prosecuting attorney, or the prosecuting clerk, immediately after he left the bench, and frequently was seen holding whispered conversations with him. There was one case in which a young fellow was sentenced to six months' hard labour on a charge of assaulting a girl. Had the case been inquired into, it would have been found that he was guilty of nothing but drunkenness and accidental assault. He certainly should have been punished severely, because it was an inexcusable thing, but the punishment did not meet the offence at all. He asked some more questions on the 3rd November—

“4. Has it been brought under his notice that a milkman was yesterday fined £10 or, as an alternative, sentenced to one month's imprisonment, for adulterating milk and thus helping to poison babies and cheat milk buyers?”

“5. Is this offence a frequent one?”

“6. Does it require more condign punishment than pilfering?”

The answers he got from the Premier were—

“4. Yes.

“5. Mr. Pears, the police magistrate, reports that there have not been many prosecutions for adulteration of milk since he has held that position at South Brisbane.

“6. That is a matter for the tribunal, and depends on the circumstances of the case and the previous character of the offender.”

A man with thirty years' unimpeachable character got six months for stealing a pot of grease, because of influence brought to bear by the Department of Justice, who were influenced by the owners of property. Apparently they were prepared to hand out the most severe sentences for crimes against property, whereas offences against the person were let off with a mere paltry fine—a fine that anyone at all could pay. If the principle was going to be adopted, when certain crimes were rife, that the punishment must be severe, they might as well reintroduce capital punishment for all sorts of crime. Fifty or sixty years ago capital punishment was imposed in the old country for nearly all crimes against property, and they might as well revert to that system if irresponsible magistrates were going to deal out sentences under instructions from the Department of Justice acting upon instructions from commercial people.

Mr. THEODORE: It was grossly improper for the Department of Justice to circularise magistrates, as had been done in the case alluded to by the hon. member for Paddington. The next thing would be that they would find the department issuing circulars to magistrates instructing them to impose severe sentences upon unionists for offences that they might be alleged to have committed. He did not suppose wharf labourers were any more dishonest than any other class in the community. Because a few might have been guilty of pilfering, that was no reason why a stigma should be cast upon the whole body. The man to whom the hon. member alluded was certified to have been of irreproachable character for upwards of thirty years, but the magistrate did not take that into account, but, acting on the circular of the Department of Justice and the representations of the Chamber of Commerce, he sentenced him to six months without the option. That sort of sentence could not be defended. If the intention was to make an example, they might go to the extent of hanging a few wharf labourers by the neck until they were dead, to deter others from stealing pots of grease. He had very little confidence in some of the police magistrates. They seemed to develop jaundiced and lop-sided views with regard to certain offenders who came before them. This was a remark made by one police magistrate in Brisbane on 9th September last—

“I think it is a great pity that there are so many people brought up here for drunkenness. Two weeks hence they will be crying out that they cannot get sufficient work.”

Most of the offenders could afford to forfeit their bail, so that apparently they did not belong to the unemployed class. Just about that time an unemployed deputation waited on the Premier, asking him to start some rail-

ways and other public works, and this police magistrate evidently thought he might help the Government along by condemning all the unemployed and saying they were all getting drunk, and that in a couple of weeks they would be crying out that they could not get work. Everyone knew that there was more drunkenness among the shabby gentility of the upper and middle classes than there was among working men. There was very little drunkenness in Brisbane amongst the working men. He thought the working men were a remarkably temperate body of people. The magistrates should curb their tongues a little more. If they wanted to express their views on unemployment, they should resign their positions as magistrates and take up some other public position, where they would be more competent to criticise. He did not want to give the name of the magistrate, but it was the gentleman who presided at the sittings of the court on the 9th of September, and his remarks were published and commented on in a subleader in the “Observer” of 10th September. The Minister might take the matter in hand, and see the wisdom of dropping a hint to the magistrates that they would be better employed in giving strict attention to the cases that came before them, without expressing themselves on public matters of that sort.

Mr. BOWMAN: He had noticed the circular issued by the Chamber of Commerce, and he happened to know the man who was sent to gaol for six months. He was a wharf labourer, and he lived in the Windsor electorate. After the man was sentenced, the hon. member for Windsor and himself waited on the Home Secretary to see if the man's sentence could not be lessened. It just happened that the Home Secretary had returned from a trip to the North, and while on his trip he had the experience of losing his bag and a pair of spectacles, and he would not budge in the matter of lessening the man's sentence. He did not know whether that was the reason or not. He (Mr. Bowman) was not there to justify thieving on the wharves. In fact, he was sure that no hon. member wanted to see that carried on; but he thought it unwise to discriminate between one class of criminal and another. There was no doubt that a direct set had been made against the wharf labourers. It had been said that there had been a good deal of pilfering on the wharves. He had known this man for a number of years, and he bore an excellent character. He denied having taken the tin of lead, worth about 6s. 6d., but he was sentenced to imprisonment for six months without the option of a fine. That was altogether too strong for a first offence. The Home Secretary felt that there had been too much pilfering going on on the wharves, and he wanted an example made to others. He quite agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Paddington and the hon. member for Chillagoe about the instructions issued by the Justice Department. It was a disgrace that any instructions should be sent from the Justice Department backed up by the Chamber of Commerce. The commercial men might have suffered by the pilfering—and he was sorry to see any man suffer from that cause—but it would have been more reasonable if a fine had been imposed. What was the First Offenders' Probation Act for? This man had never been before the court before, and he had a respectable wife and family, and yet he

Mr. Bowman.]

was imprisoned for six months. It was too severe. He hoped the Minister would use his influence with the Attorney-General, and have the instructions withdrawn. If a man did wrong he should be punished, but the punishment should be commensurate with the offence committed. He knew that the hon. member for Windor condemned the practice of issuing the circular just as strongly as he did himself. When the magistrates dole out punishment as they did in this case, it was overstepping the bounds of justice altogether.

Mr. BOUCHARD (*Brisbane South*) was glad to hear the hon. member for Fortitude Valley say he was no apologist for pilfering. It was notorious that throughout the metropolitan area there had been a tremendous amount of pilfering going on, and it was only right, in the interests of the public, that the people guilty of these offences should be taught a lesson. Fines had been inflicted, but they had not had the desired effect. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley was not correct when he said that a set had been made against the wharf-lumpers. It must be within the recollection of hon. members that shoplifting was rife in Brisbane, and although fines were inflicted they did not have the desired effect; but since imprisonment had been inflicted the offence had not been repeated. When offences were so persistent, it was necessary to have some drastic punishment to act as a deterrent. If it was not desirable to inflict imprisonment, why insert it in the Act at all?

Mr. FIDELLY: Do you justify the circular sent out by the Justice Department?

Mr. BOUCHARD: He never saw the circular. It was unnecessary to send out a circular, because the resolution passed by the Chamber of Commerce was made public, and was probably read by the magistrates. He did not think the Justice Department should dictate to the magistrates what they should do in these matters, and he did not think the metropolitan magistrates were going to be dictated to by the Justice Department.

He did not think they would be [8 p.m.] governed by any circular, but that they would exercise their own discretion. It had come to his knowledge that another circular had been issued, and he was sure it had not arisen from the person to whom it had reference. It had reference to the Under Secretary of the department, who was a gentleman for whom he had the greatest respect, and who, doubtless, commanded the respect of all hon. members. It had been reported to him that it was intended to make a presentation to that gentleman.

Mr. FIDELLY: We have had all this before.

Mr. BOUCHARD: Then he would not pursue the matter further.

Mr. WINSTANLEY said it would be interesting to hear the reason for the increases in one or two cases which the Minister said he would be able to satisfactorily explain. It would also be interesting to hear why and how certain transfers took place. It seemed to him that while there was a feeling in some quarters that the police magistrates did not mete out justice, there was also a feeling amongst police magistrates themselves that they did not get justice, and in some cases there was an idea abroad that

[*Mr. Bowman.*

some police magistrates were pets of the department and got special treatment to which they were not entitled. It would be interesting to know if there was any method by which police magistrates were transferred from one place to another, or whether police magistrates appointed to North Queensland towns were to be kept there for ever, or could get transferred to some congenial place in the south. There was a feeling that there was a lack of justice in these appointments and transfers. He knew some who had been in the service a long time, and seemed to spend practically the whole of their official career in these isolated, out-of-the-way North-western towns. It was not fair to them or to their families. It seemed to him that one man should not have the opportunity of getting the best positions all the time without any regard to seniority or ability.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION pointed out, in reply to the hon. member for Queenton, that what guided the department in making promotions was, first of all, merit, and secondly, seniority, and that every effort was used to see that no injustice was suffered by any individual entitled to promotion. There were a great many men in the department, and they gradually came on, some more rapidly than others. Some showed ability for magisterial work, while others had greater gifts for administrative work, and hence it was the department's duty—and it was not always an enviable one—to strive to pick out the one most suited to the particular position. If the hon. member had anybody in his mind particularly, he would be glad if he would come across later on and give him the name—he did not want it given publicly—and inquiries would be made. The hon. member for Paddington had already raised the point referred to by the hon. member for South Brisbane, and he had already told the Committee that that circular had been issued not with the knowledge of the Under Secretary, but with the view of celebrating his jubilee. Whether that jubilee would come off now he could not say. With regard to the other matter, a general circular was issued, but it did not seek to direct the magistrates to exercise jurisdiction in a particular way, nor did it seek to compel them so to do. It was sent out by the Under Secretary as a result of the deputation which waited upon the Attorney-General, calling the attention of the magistrates to the matter.

Mr. THEODORE: By direction of the Attorney-General?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He presumed so. The question arose with regard to this circular, first of all, whether it was right to issue it from a legal point of view, and, secondly, whether it was a proper action to take. With regard to the first point, he might point out that it was an ordinary occurrence in Great Britain. He had here a pamphlet headed "For Official Use. Circulars and Statutory Rules issued from the Home Office to Justices and Justices' Clerks, 1883-1913," in which was the following circular:—

"10th January, 1912.

"Sir,—I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that, in consequence of representations recently received from local authorities charged with the enforcement of the provisions of the above

Acts, he thinks it right to draw attention to the Home Office circular of the 24th July, 1902. Later figures obtained by the Local Government Board in connection with this subject demonstrate the large proportion of cases still occurring under these Acts in which penalties are imposed of such a small amount as to suggest that the offence is regarded as being of an altogether trivial character. The Secretary of State will therefore be glad if you will bring the circular to the notice of your justices with a view to securing careful consideration of the adequacy of the penalties which they may decide to impose in cases under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts."

There were any amount of others to which he could refer. It was an ordinary thing for the Secretary of State in Great Britain to draw the attention of the magistrates to the fact that where the imposition of what were regarded as trivial penalties were leading others to commit offences, they should take this fact into consideration in future. Coming to the particular question raised by the hon. member for Paddington and the hon. member for Chillingoe, he wished to correct one mistake. The man did not get six months' imprisonment; he got three months.

Mr. FIEHELLY: It was for stealing a pot of grease that a man got six months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: All he could say was that from his knowledge of magistrates, they were men who strove to do their duty, and he did not think that any magistrate would consciously allow prejudice to operate. He would be sorry to think that there were any men in judicial positions who did that. His experience was that even counsel who were defending a man and who might believe him to be innocent, often came to the conclusion, after consideration, that the punishment inflicted was one which was calculated to meet the offence. The hon. member for Paddington said there was discrimination between offences against property and offences against the person, but he quoted a case which rather destroyed his argument. Of course he (Mr. Blair) did not know what the particulars or merits of the case were.

Mr. FIEHELLY: My complaint was that the police magistrate did not take evidence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Then the man must have pleaded guilty, otherwise the magistrate must have taken evidence. If the offence was an aggravated one, two months' imprisonment was not too much for an assault. With regard to the offence of stealing a keg of lead, valued at 6s. 3d., he could not say, and he was not going to surmise, whether the penalty imposed was a proper penalty. All he could say was that the case was tried by a man who had had many years' experience, and who was looked upon by the department as a man of ability with a level head. The hon. member for Paddington suggested that prosecuting counsel consulted with the police magistrate with regard to the penalty.

Mr. FIEHELLY: No; a clerk from the Justice Department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If a clerk did that, he would be doing an absolutely improper thing. (Hear, hear!) A magistrate must decide a case on the evidence before him, without any influence from anyone, and any magistrate

who did a thing of that kind—he would be very sorry to think that a magistrate would—would be acting extra judicially, and that would probably be a ground of appeal. Clerks or counsel had no right to consult with the police magistrate in any way with regard to the possible decision of a case. That was his view; it was also the view of the department; and he was sure it was a view in which the Attorney-General concurred.

Mr. FIEHELLY: It was on an American decision.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If it was a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, he knew of no better law. He did not think, and never did, that severe penalties for first offences were of any utility. In the majority of cases he would not send a person to prison for a first offence—(hear, hear!)—but having said that much, he ought also to say that one had to consider the facts of a particular case, and that, unless one had the facts before one, it was almost impossible to give an opinion of value.

Mr. THEODORE: The case he was referring to was that a man working on the wharves at South Brisbane, who was charged with stealing one pot of grease. He quite agreed with the Minister that no man who was not obviously a hardened criminal should be sent to gaol for a first offence. In the case he mentioned, the man had an absolutely clean record for thirty years, and his (Mr. Theodore's) honest opinion was that the magistrate did not deal fairly with him. On the same day, in the same court, another individual was charged with stealing a set of billiard balls, valued at £3, and he was fined £2 and given a month in which to pay the fine. In another case which came before the same court, an ex-magistrate, who had 100 charges against him in the police record, was charged with obtaining money under false pretences. This man pretended that he was a collector for the hospital, got subscriptions and spent the money; he was fined £2 and given time to pay. The course suggested in the circular issued by the department was not followed in that case, and it seemed to him that discrimination was shown in the matter. The magistrate must have come to the conclusion that he was one concerned in systematic pilfering, but according to the evidence he was not concerned in any such system. Apparently it was his first attempt, and unsuccessful, in getting away with stuff from the wharf, and it was only a miserable pot of grease, which, however, got him six months. He had a good deal of sympathy for that man and his family. He thought the magistrates should act with more wisdom and discretion. Within two or three days he showed that large discrimination between the cases of two persons guilty of apparently equal offences. How could a magistrate justify dealings of that sort? He did not think he could; and he did not think that the Chamber of Commerce, who alleged these things about pilfering, could justify their allegations. They knew that pilfering did take place, but nothing to the extent that the chamber made out. In comparison with the hundreds of thousands and millions of pounds' worth of goods that were handled, the amount lost through pilfering amounted to less than nought point blank nothing per cent., and to make out that the wharf labourers were taking away a valuable portion of them was simply misrepresenting the case.

Mr. Theodore.]

Mr. BOWMAN: He was very glad to hear the Minister say that he believed in leniency for first offenders. He only wished that some of the magistrates would catch some of the hon. member's feeling in regard to the matter. The mother of a boy came to him last week and told him that her son, between fifteen and sixteen years of age, who was caught taking an umbrella from McWhirter's, had been sent to Riverview for three years. She told him that he spent from Friday or Saturday until the Monday on which he was tried, in the lockup, with those who were accustomed to be taken there. He was employed by a reputable firm in Brisbane, and bore an excellent character, and this was his first offence. He did not justify the lad taking the umbrella, but he thought that a chance should be given in a case like that. At any rate, three years was a monstrous sentence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There must be something more in it than that.

Mr. BOWMAN: He was giving the Minister the exact statement as it was given to him by the boy's mother. The hon. member for Buranda and he went to the State Children's Department to see if they could not get him out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I hope the hon. member will give me his name privately.

Mr. BOWMAN: He would do so before the House rose.

Mr. FIDELLY: The Minister was curious in regard to a case he quoted of a young fellow who got six months for assault. It might bring it to his mind if he said that, in the first instance, the magistrate refused him legal assistance—an unprecedented thing. Of course, he had to change his mind. He did not know either party concerned, but as certain representations were made to him he took the trouble to go out and see the girl. She told him that she would be satisfied if the boy bought her a new hat for 7s. 6d. or 8s. But the magistrate, after moralising for an hour and plaguing the pressman and those who frequented that part of the court, inflicted a savage sentence of six months, to show that he was justified in his moralising. The boy had an undoubted character. He was drunk, and certainly should have been severely punished, but six months with hard labour was quite disproportionate to the crime. Coming back to pilfering, he also was glad to hear that the Minister believed in leniency to first offenders. It might be worth pointing out that the shipping companies who complained of this pilfering were themselves actually pilfering away from the public very valuable foreshores. So the shipping companies had a good set-off. He thought that the department were wise in adopting the practice of promoting to the position of police magistrate smart young clerks of petty sessions, but the good men were sent out into the country, and only brought to a busy centre like Brisbane when they were jailed and useless. Then, it was doubtful whether the Justice Department were wise in introducing law from various American States and quoting it here to put magistrates in a hole. He knew that Sir Samuel Griffith had a weakness for American law, but our own judges had not. To illustrate the principle on

which that law proceeded sometimes, he might quote the instance of a well-known State judge, who asked a prisoner what age he was, and on being told, "Thirty-five," replied, "Well, you will be forty when you come out." (Laughter.) They were told that the doctrine of to-day was that, if a person was promoted to a position, it carried the higher salary with it. He contended that that applied only when they came to the highly paid officials, and he noticed that the clerk of petty sessions at Brisbane, whose predecessor got £330, was only getting £300; that the police magistrate at Blackall was getting only £350, whereas his [8.30 p.m.] predecessor got £400; and the police magistrate at Charleville got £360, although his predecessor got £450. If the principle was going to be adopted that the position carried the salary, then it should prevail throughout the service and not be restricted to a few favoured people who had the ear of the Ministers. It was an unfortunate thing that that should occur, and he hoped the Minister, as regarded the Department of Education, would see that the position carried the salary in all cases, and not be restricted to an isolated case here and there.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) called attention to the desirability of dealing with the question of the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate for Brisbane. It was generally recognised throughout the legal profession that it was highly desirable, in a city like Brisbane, where some very important cases were heard, that the magistrate on the bench should be a man who had proper training. At present, it was the custom to give the position to the senior magistrate, irrespective of whether he was qualified for the position or not. He did not wish it to be inferred that he was in any way reflecting on the gentleman who at present occupied the position. The late Mr. Ranking was an exceptionally able man and, it was admitted by all, a very just man; and it was understood, when his unfortunate death occurred, that the Government would have introduced the new system. He (Mr. Kirwan) trusted, when the opportunity again occurred, that the Minister in charge of the department would give the matter very serious consideration. He was not there to say anything in defence of the offence of pilfering. Unfortunately, it was of frequent occurrence, but, nevertheless, the sentences inflicted recently were altogether out of proportion to the offence. He remembered the time when the Federal Government was pilfered of thousands of pounds through the Customs, and when they had a Minister strong enough to take action against those gentlemen, what did the Chamber of Commerce do? Did they stand by the Minister? Not only the Chamber of Commerce, but the Press of Brisbane, denounced the late Hon. Charles Kingston for being courageous enough to place men of undoubted commercial position in the dock and let them stand their trial, the same as the wharf lumpers. If they were going to administer the law, let it be the same all round, whether a man stole a pot of grease or defrauded the Customs revenue of thousands a year. The man who pilfered from the Customs was a bigger scoundrel than the man who stole a pot of grease from the wharf.

Question put and passed.

[*Mr. Bowman.*]

CROWN SOLICITOR (BRISBANE).

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £3,062 be granted for "Crown Solicitor (Brisbane)." There was very little change in this department, except that Mr. Webb was appointed in place of Mr. Harrington, who had resigned. The associate to Mr. Justice Shand (Mr. Henchman) was also appointed to cope with the work, and an additional typist at £80 a year, as well as a cadet clerk at £60.

Question put and passed.

CROWN SOLICITOR (TOWNSVILLE).

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £400 be granted for "Crown Solicitor (Townsville)." The vote was £15 less than the amount voted last year, there being a reduction of that amount in the vote for postage, telegrams, railway fares, printing, stationery, and incidentals.

Question put and passed.

DISTRICT COURTS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £8,930 be granted for "District Courts." This vote was exactly the same as that of last year.

Mr. RYAN asked whether it was the intention of the Government to continue the practice, which had been in vogue for some time, of appointing District Court judges to the position of acting Supreme Court judges? He had no doubt that those appointments were made on the ground that the judges were thoroughly competent to fulfil the duties which they had to discharge in the Supreme Court; and if that was so, why was it that the increased remuneration was not paid? He thought acting Supreme Court judges were not desirable, and he understood that some of the District Court judges who were appointed to the Supreme Court had very onerous duties, which they performed very efficiently, and he would like to know why the Crown left them as acting Supreme Court judges on the salary of District Court judges? The point required looking into in one direction or another.

Mr. BOUCHARD said there was something in the contention of the hon. member for Barcoo. He knew of no other instance where a person was appointed to act in a higher capacity without getting some increase in salary. Take, for instance, the House itself. If the Speaker was absent and the Chairman of Committees was appointed Acting Speaker, he received an increased salary.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: No.

Mr. BOUCHARD: At any rate, it was the case in the other House. If a District Court judge was appointed acting Supreme Court judge, he should certainly get some extra remuneration. He would also point out that there had been an acting District Court judge for nearly twelve months. Why not make an appointment straight out? That was the proper thing to do. He did not think those positions should be kept vacant.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The rule laid down when the last two appointments were made to the District Court bench was that, should occasion arise that Supreme Court work was to be done, the judges would do it without extra remuneration save additional travelling expenses. The reason why there had been an acting District Court judge for twelve months was because of the unfortunate illness of Mr. Justice Shand. Mr. District Court Judge Jameson was appointed to act in his place, and Mr. Dickson, the Crown Prosecutor, was appointed to take Judge Jameson's place.

Mr. THEODORE: Evidently, it was not the intention of the Government to go on with the District Courts Bill. That Bill had been passed unanimously by the other House, where it had been passed once before. The Bill proposed a very important reform, which would have the effect of rendering law less costly to litigants, whilst proceedings would be quite as expeditious as at present, and the District Court would be able to deal with cases which it was not now competent to deal with. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee, which took a lot of evidence. The lay member and the learned counsel who were members of the committee approved of the Bill, but the other members did not favour the measure. They were lawyers, and possibly interested in the proposed reform.

Mr. BOUCHARD rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in saying that certain members of the Select Committee were opposed to the Bill because, being members of the legal profession, they were interested parties?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I do not think there is any point of order. (Laughter.)

Mr. THEODORE: The learned counsel and the lay member of the committee were in favour of the proposed reform but the solicitors were against it.

Mr. WILLIAMS: How many learned counsel were in favour of it? The one sitting near you was not.

Mr. THEODORE: The Bill proposed to enable the litigating public to get their cases dealt with more expeditiously and more cheaply, and probably with just as much common sense as in the Supreme Court. The reform was therefore one that should have had an opportunity of being passed into law. It was most unfortunate that the Government appeared to have dropped the Bill—probably at the instance of members of the legal profession. The chairman of the Select Committee was strongly opposed to it. He regretted that the Government had seen fit to throw it overboard, especially as they had gone on with that abortion, the Elections Acts Amendment Bill, which nobody wanted except the Liberal party. Possibly next session the Bill would be re-introduced by a Labour Government; but if the electors should, unfortunately, return the Liberal party again to power, perhaps they would then place the Bill on the statute-book.

Mr. WILLIAMS did not know whether the hon. member for Chillagoe was in order in discussing that matter, but he would like

Mr. Williams.]

to say that the reason why three members of the Select Committee did not approve of the Bill in its present form was because they considered it would be injurious to the public and good for the lawyers. (Laughter.) That was a conclusion based on the evidence submitted by gentlemen who knew what the Bill would mean. An independent person like Mr. Justice Lukin pointed out in his report that the Bill in its present form would be injurious to the public in every possible way. The members of the Select Committee who were opposed to the present Bill were quite prepared to bring in a reasonable Bill, but they could not possibly support one that would be injurious to the public.

Mr. THEODORE: What did Judge Jameson say?

Mr. WILLIAMS: He said very little about it, and Judge Macnaughton gave no opinion at all. So far from the learned counsel who were members of the Select Committee and the lay members being in favour of the Bill, one counsel and one layman signed a minority report in favour of the Bill, but the other learned counsel did not sign either report. He hoped the Bill would still come before the House and let hon. members say whether they would pass it or not.

Mr. FIFELLY thought, in common with the hon. member for Chillagoe, that this Government did not believe in law reform. The Districts Courts Bill had been passed twice by another place. On the second occasion that it came before the Assembly it was referred to a Select Committee of lawyers. When the Farm Produce Bill was passed last year, it was not referred to a Select Committee of produce agents, and when they passed the Pure Seeds Bill they did not refer it to a Select Committee of seed merchants. He was not complaining about the Bill being referred to lawyers, but the Government did not want law reform, or else they would have referred the Bill to laymen. All law reform came from laymen. The lawyers on that committee were against the Bill for various reasons. They included the hon. members for Toowong, South Brisbane, and Charters Towers, and the hon. member for Charters Towers gave a novel reason as to why he opposed it. It was a very unusual reason for a lawyer to give. The measure was badly wanted by people outside, because they had to pay exorbitant fees to settle an ordinary commercial dispute. The Government wanted to pile up costs. They wanted big fees, big briefs, and big refreshers. He would like the Minister to explain why the Bill had not been passed? It must have cost hundreds of pounds already for printing. They had a Commercial Causes Act which was a good Act, and it was a pity that they did not have this Districts Courts Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He was sorry that the time had become too restricted to deal with the District Courts Bill in Committee. It was referred by the House to a Select Committee.

Mr. FIFELLY: Why did you pick lawyers on that committee?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It was picked by the Chairman.

Mr. FIFELLY: With the Government's consent?

[*Mr. Williams.*]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Government consented to its being referred to a Select Committee but it was open for any member of the House to get up and object to that reference, but no one did object to it. Therefore, the responsibility for the reference to appointment of the committee rested with the House and not with any individual member. He was on that committee, and the hon. member for Chillagoe agreed with his report. The whole matter was carefully discussed, and he suggested certain amendments. He was quite satisfied that if those amendments were incorporated, it would be a good Bill. However, time would not permit of its being brought in now. He would like to see an amendment of the law brought in as a result of the discussion on the Bill. In an amending Bill they could arrange for stipendiary magistrates being appointed, and no District Court at all. The present District Court judges could be shifted on to the Supreme Court, and they would all go on circuit. Appeal courts could be simplified and law cheapened. That was his idea of the simplification of legal procedure. (Hear, hear!) He hoped before many years to see it in force, no matter which party brought it in.

Question put and passed.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £1,490 be granted for "Friendly Societies." There was an increase of £25 over the vote of last year.

Mr. THEODORE asked if the Government had any intention of following out the recommendations of the Registrar of Friendly Societies by introducing an amending Trade Unions Act? He had repeatedly asked the Government to make this necessary amendment of the trade unions law to protect the trade unions of Queensland. At present the trade unions were open to attack by unscrupulous individuals and employers, for no other reason than that they were opposed to unionism. At present the unions were running the risk of being destroyed, and they were not protected by any law in Queensland. There were numbers of unions in Queensland which were not registered under the Trade Unions Act, because they were debarred by their rules of the small vestige of protection afforded by the Trade Unions Act. In England they were far and away ahead of Queensland in their trade union law, and they had passed two amendments of the law. The Queensland law should be brought into line with the English law. At one time a Bill was passed in the Assembly, and he believed it was introduced by the present Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I did not introduce it.

Mr. THEODORE: The hon. gentleman supported it. It was called the Trade Disputes Bill. It was passed in England to render nugatory the Taff Vale decision regarding the funds of unions. Then there was the Osborne judgment—another extraordinary judgment, which attacked the rights of unions, and stated that their funds could not be devoted to political purposes. The law was again amended in England to meet that judgment. It protected the union funds from attack. The registrar had called attention to the necessity for an up-to-date

Act in Queensland. In Queensland there were only 7,992 members of unions registered, whereas that number did not represent one-twelfth of the number of unionists in Queensland. There were 23,000 members of the Australian Workers' Union, 6,000 members of the Meat Industry Union, and many thousands of members in the Waterside Workers' Union. They had no legal status, and were not protected by any law as they should be. They could not sue, and they could not be sued. If anyone pilfered their

[9 p.m.] funds, the union had no redress at all. If they were registered associations, they should be given the protection of the law. The Government might not agree with the general policy of the unions, but that was not the question at issue. The question was whether they were pursuing legitimate objects, and if they were they should be registered as any other society. The only redress they had got was to get some of their members, or nominal trustees, to lodge a complaint with the police and endeavour to get a conviction of those persons. If the members suffered wrong at the hand of individuals they had no civil redress, and the Government should give them this protection. He should like to hear what the Secretary for Public Instruction had to say.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member raised this question last year, and he, at that time, promised to give it careful consideration. As far as the Government was concerned, it had no policy antagonistic to unionism at all. He, personally, believed in unionism; and he believed that that was the position of the Government. (Hear, hear!) With regard to this particular matter, the legislation in England had been amended twice, he believed, only last year. The department was following up the matter very carefully, and, he believed, was in consultation with the Registrar of Friendly Societies; and when they got the consolidating measure from home he would promise that a measure would be drafted on those lines. The hon. member had brought the matter up for the last three years now; and that was the position.

Question put and passed.

At 9 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

INDUSTRIAL COURT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £600 be granted for "Industrial Court." The vote for last year was increased by £50 for travelling expenses.

Question put and passed.

INSOLVENCY, INTESTACY, AND INSANITY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £2,500 be granted for "Insolvency, Intestacy, and Insanity." There was no alteration in this vote from last year.

Question put and passed.

PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £50 be granted for "Parliamentary Draftsman."

Mr. THEODORE did not know whether the Parliamentary Draftsman was employed all the year round or only a few months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He is at call.

Mr. THEODORE: No doubt, he had a large private practice, as he was one of the most difficult men to find. He paid this tribute to Mr. Woolcock's drafting—he drafted the Bills and amendments submitted to him as clearly as a lawyer could make them. (Laughter.) He remembered the Minister at one time say that he considered £500 was a fair thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In 1902-3; there are reasons for it.

Mr. THEODORE thought that Mr. Woolcock might make his services more available to members of the Committee. It was a disadvantage for an hon. member to have to submit his own amendments, because the Parliamentary Draftsman, who had drafted the original measure, could say whether a particular amendment conformed to the general contents of the Bill; but, unfortunately—no doubt on account of his private practice—Mr. Woolcock's services were not always available. He should give an undertaking to the Government that he would be accessible, either personally, or by telephone, at his chambers. The Minister might make that suggestion to him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He had always understood that the House voted this salary in order that any hon. members could have the services of his Draftsman. He would convey to Mr. Woolcock the comment of the hon. member as to his accessibility. With regard to the £500, the Parliamentary Draftsman was originally getting £600, which, he thought, was reduced at the time of the retrenchment to £500. At that time retrenchment was rife in the department, and he had expressed the opinion ascribed to him by the hon. member for Chillagoe. Since then the salary had been brought back to £600, and last year to £650.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION BOARD.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £400 be granted for the "Public Service Superannuation Board." There was a reduction of £50 in this vote as compared with the appropriation for last year.

Question put and passed.

SHERIFF—SOUTHERN, CENTRAL, AND NORTHERN.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £4,315 be granted for the "Sheriff—Southern, Central, and Northern Divisions." This vote was reduced by £160—salaries by £60, and contingencies by £100.

Question put and passed.

SUPREME COURT (SOUTHERN DIVISION).

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £6,447 be granted for the "Supreme Court (Southern Division)." The amount was £50 more than was voted

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last year, and this was owing to the fact that the associate to the Chief Justice received an increase of £50.

Mr. KIRWAN regretted that, when the question of increase was being considered, the salary of the night watchman was not considered. He brought this matter up last year, and he believed he received a promise that the matter would receive consideration. The night watchman at the Supreme Court received only £100 a year, while other night watchmen received salaries up to £140. He hoped this officer would not be overlooked.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He had tried to get an increase for the night watchman at the Supreme Court, but owing to the unfortunate circumstances which existed, he had not been able to do so. Possibly something might be done in this case at some future time, but he might say that the department considered that £100 was not insufficient for the work the officer had to do.

Question put and passed.

SUPREME COURT (CENTRAL DIVISION).

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £1,420 be granted for the "Supreme Court (Central Division)." There was a decrease of £60 in this vote compared with the amount voted last year.

Question put and passed.

SUPREME COURT (NORTHERN DIVISION).

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £2,630 be granted for the "Supreme Court (Northern Division)."

Mr. WILLIAMS wished to refer to the position of the registrar, official trustee, and local deputy curator. All those offices were held by Mr. Norris, who had been in the service eighteen years, and was an exceedingly capable, painstaking, and conscientious officer, but he had far too many duties to perform. He would like to see Mr. Norris getting more salary, but he did not suggest that at the present time. What he did suggest, not in the interest of Mr. Norris alone, but in the interest of the public—very many of whom had to see him on business, but often could not get the attention they ought to get from him owing to the multifarious duties he had to discharge—was that another officer should be appointed to relieve him of some of his duties.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION said Mr. Norris was an exceptionally good officer, and did good work for the public as well as for the department, and he would certainly convey the recommendations of the hon. member for Charters Towers to the Attorney-General.

Question put and passed.

TITLES AND STAMPS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved that £15,045 be granted for "Titles and Stamps." There was practically very little change in this vote.

Question put and passed.

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THE TREASURER.

THE TREASURY.

The TREASURER moved that £28,086 be granted for "The Treasury." There was very little difference between the amount asked for this year and the amount voted last year. The officer in charge of securities had been dispensed with, because there was no work for him to do, but a position had been found for him in another department of the service.

Mr. BOWMAN: Last year he brought up the advisability of having gas meter inspectors, and he had quoted statistics to show how frequently they were used in the large towns and municipalities of the old country. He did not know whether the same applied to Australian cities, but he thought that the Treasurer might take the matter in hand. He did not wish to say anything in regard to the attitude of those who controlled our gas companies, but cases had come under his notice in which people had gone away for holidays, and when they came back they found that they had been charged a fair amount for gas. Whether it was because of defective meters, he did not know. He believed that such a system as he proposed would be a very great advantage to people who used gas, not only in Brisbane, but right throughout the State. They had inspectors of weights and measures, which he regarded as a splendid thing, and they also had water meter inspectors, and what applied to other commodities applied to gas.

Mr. FIDELLY: He also would like to touch upon the matter mentioned by the hon. member. On the 15th October, he asked the Premier a series of questions, which were to be found in the journals of the House. He asked first—

"1. Is he aware that the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria have fixed the price of gas?"

To which the reply was—

"The Government of New South Wales has fixed a standard price and is now considering an application for an increase thereof; have not yet ascertained the action taken in Victoria."

He also asked—

"Is he aware that the Government of Victoria are introducing legislation providing for a rigid system of gas meter testing and the fixing of a calorific standard for the gas supplied to the public?"

The reply was—

"Yes, but no detailed information is to hand."

In reply to another question—

"Will he adopt similar measures for the protection of Queensland gas consumers?"—

the Premier replied—

"Yes, if such action is necessary."

He could assure the Premier that such action was absolutely necessary. It was an extraordinary thing that they had inspection of weights and measures, and standards

for every conceivable item that was sold anywhere, but the gas companies were allowed to be in untrammelled commercial intercourse with everybody. They were allowed to go their own way. He also asked the Premier—

“4. Is it a fact that the meters imported into Queensland are so adjusted that a gas consumption equal to an excess of 25 per cent. can be registered on the indicator?”

The hon. gentleman replied—

“All meters supplied to Queensland are tested and stamped as accurate by the British Board of Trade, and are similar to those supplied to New South Wales and other States.”

That was misleading, in so far as the English manufacturers sent a particular pattern to the Board of Trade, and that pattern was approved, but all those of the same pattern were not necessarily the same. There could be some alteration. It was a matter that absolutely needed some sort of provision, and the sooner it was started in Brisbane the better. He also asked the Premier—

“5. Will he ascertain whether the meters in use register air, which may be forced through the pipes in the same way as gas?”—

and his reply was—

“Just as a water meter may register other liquids, a gas meter may register air if air and not gas is forced through it.”

That would suggest that the gas companies could, at their own sweet will, shove air through their pipes. Every man who lived in South Brisbane knew that he paid for air. When he went home at midnight, he could get a fair light for reading by, but he had no chance of reading at 7 o'clock in the evening. There was no pressure; no gas. The matter required some Government action, just as it was necessary to see that the man who sold bread kept to a 2-lb. loaf. He also asked the Premier—

“6. Is he aware that the price of gas at Ipswich is lower than that obtaining in South Brisbane?”

“7. What is the reason?”

The Premier replied—

“6. and 7. I am aware that the price of gas is lower in South Brisbane than in Ipswich.”

It was quite true that the price of gas for heating purposes was lower in South Brisbane than in Ipswich, but the price of gas for purposes of illumination was about 2d. higher in South Brisbane than in Ipswich. The whole business was calling aloud for Government action. The gas companies here had a monopoly, and the municipalities had not a wide enough franchise to enable them to enter into rivalry with them. They should have inspectors of meters and also supervision in the gasworks themselves to see that air was not forced through the pipes. The Premier practically said he would not take any action. But it was necessary. A large proportion of the working people in South Brisbane used gas for cooking pur-

poses, and it was a well-known fact that there was no chance of cooking a meal at a quarter to 6. It took hours to cook, and were it not that he had a stove that burned firewood, he would very often go without his tea. He hoped the Treasurer would do something. The Government was a decrepit

institution. It seemed to be at [9.30 p.m.] its last gasp. The Government had introduced the Elections Bill in order to give them a new lease of life after the next elections, and they left untouched many real issues of public interest. The whole of Southern Queensland was in a state of turmoil. They had some railways introduced to catch votes, and they had some alleged Trusts and Combines Bill promised, while necessary legislation was being ignored.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FIELLY: He was pointing out that the Government would do nothing in regard to the gas supply.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member will be out of order.

Mr. FIELLY: The Treasurer could get revenue from that source, and he should insist on all gas receipts being stamped. He hoped the decrepit Government, which found itself on its last legs, would do something in the matter.

Mr. BERTRAM asked for some information in regard to the amount of £18,000 for “Commission, Exchange, etc.” He presumed the money was required in connection with the flotation of loans and purposes of that kind, and it seemed to him that a saving might be effected if the flotation of loans and other business were done through the Commonwealth Bank. Not only would it have that effect, but would also have the effect of putting money into the coffers of the Commonwealth Bank that would otherwise go into the coffers of the Bank of England and the underwriters.

The TREASURER said there was certainly something in what had been stated by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the hon. member for Paddington in regard to the necessity for the appointment of inspectors in connection with the supply of gas. He was not in a position to say that the Government would appoint gas inspectors, but inquiries would be made as to the practice elsewhere, so that it would be a guide as to any action the Government might take in that connection. With regard to the item for “Commission and Exchange,” he ought to explain to the Committee, as perhaps was generally known, the Bank of England did all the Government's business in England in connection with the flotation of loans. That business had to be done in certain channels, and the experience of the past had been that the Bank of England did the work very satisfactorily. He had no objection at all to doing business with the Commonwealth Bank, but, as a matter of fact, there was an agreement with the Bank of England, and that agreement must be respected. The amount was largely an approximate one, but it was a very necessary amount. Of course, the smaller the amount required, the better it would be for the Treasury.

Mr. LARCOMBE said the State Government should take up, in the near future, the

Mr. Larcombe.]

question of the transfer of the State debts and the control of future borrowing by the Commonwealth, and try and arrive at some definite and practical scheme. Ever since the consummation of federation, the question of the transfer of the States debts and the control of future borrowing had been discussed at conference after conference, and no decision had been arrived at. The transfer of States debts and control of future borrowing by the Commonwealth was one of the strong arguments used in favour of federation by many of the ablest public men in Australia. They argued that the general control by the Federal authority of all borrowing would lead to money being raised at a lesser rate of interest, and that there would be a saving generally and more effective control. Notwithstanding those arguments were used, nothing material had been done up to the present. The question was discussed at the last Premiers' Conference, and certain schemes submitted, and he thought Queensland should do her share towards bringing about a solution of the question. It was a question very difficult of solution. He knew that the question of State rights occurred in connection with the matter, and he was one of those who was not in favour of unduly handicapping the States in the matter of obtaining future loans, but he thought the scheme submitted by the ex-Premier of Western Australia should meet with the approval of all the States and the Commonwealth authority also. That scheme was to allow the States to borrow what money they required through the Federal authority. There was to be a yearly meeting of Treasurers, and they would decide what money they required, and that money would be borrowed for them by the Federal authority, and it had been estimated by competent authorities that such a scheme would result in a saving of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to the States. Sir John Forrest and Mr. Watt had pointed out that there were certain lenders in the old country who did not deal in small stocks, and that they would not deal with the respective States individually, but they would deal with the Commonwealth should they borrow for the whole of the States, and that by borrowing from that authority at least $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. could be saved. The public debt of Australia to-day was something like £300,000,000, and it was increasing at a very rapid rate. It was about time it was satisfactorily transferred to the Federal authority and the question of future borrowing taken over by them. Sir John Forrest and other Federal parliamentarians had indicated time and again that if the States did not agree to some scheme, they would ask the people of Australia for power to take control of future borrowing irrespective of the States. He (Mr. Larcombe) did not wish to see unification in regard to borrowing powers at present, and for that reason the States should take some action. Additional power was granted to the Commonwealth in 1910 to enable them to take over the States debts right up to that year, whereas previously they could only take over the debts up to the time of federation. The question was considered of the utmost importance by such financial authorities as Mr. Watt and Mr. Bath. He hoped that before the next Treasurer's Estimates were being considered something definite and practical would be done.

[*Mr. Larcombe.*

Mr. FIELLY asked whether the Treasurer could make an announcement with regard to Ministers' travelling expenses, which were referred to by the Auditor-General? There must have been some reason for the Auditor-General to make special comment on that phase of public expenditure. He would not do it in an irresponsible humour just for the sake of criticising Ministers.

The TREASURER: The Auditor-General's Department is under the Chief Secretary.

Mr. FIELLY: He was not talking about the Auditor-General at all, but about his criticism of certain expenditure of public funds. It was a matter that had some relation to the Treasury. For instance, what expenses did the hon. gentleman himself draw, and how were they made up? There must have been some great disparity between the expenses of different Ministers to call forth the comment of the Auditor-General. He had not got the array of figures that had been presented to the House with respect to the Home Secretary's expenses on his Northern trip, but they were almost as great as the expenses of the Premier's trip to England and back again. Then his Southern trip was like the Delhi Durbar, with all its pomp and magnificence.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not speaking to the question now under consideration.

Mr. FIELLY: The Treasurer had control of the funds, and the hon. gentleman was Acting Premier at that time.

The CHAIRMAN: The matter does not arise in connection with this vote.

Mr. FIELLY: Well, he would ask the Treasurer whether his expenses while he was travelling during the recess differed from those of his colleagues, what the expenses were, and how they were apportioned? He understood the Secretary for Public Lands also had a tremendous bill to present to his department when he returned from his trip to Western Australia. The Auditor-General had commented on the matter, and he would like to know whether the hon. gentleman's colleagues had been too greedy or whether the hon. gentleman himself had been the greedy boy.

The TREASURER: As far as he was personally concerned, he had no objection whatever to lay upon the table a return showing his total expenses as Secretary for Public Instruction, as Treasurer, and as Acting Premier since he first became a Minister. He had nothing to hide in the matter, and he was quite sure that none of his colleagues had anything to hide either.

Mr. HARDACRE: For about three years, at various times, on the Address in Reply and on the Financial Statement, he had brought up the question of a big leakage in the income tax revenue, and the Treasurer had promised that he would make inquiries.

The TREASURER: This is not the income tax vote.

Mr. HARDACRE: He was not discussing the Commissioner for Income Tax or anything appertaining to his department. The Treasurer had promised that he would look into the matter, and he would like to know whether the hon. gentleman had ever asked the Commissioner for Income Tax for a report.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in bringing up the question on this vote.

Mr. HARDACRE submitted that he was quite in order in asking the Treasurer whether he had made inquiries, as he had promised to do.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. HARDACRE: On the income tax vote he could only deal with what the Commissioner had done, but his present concern was not with anything the Commissioner had done, but with what the Treasurer had done, and the vote now before the Committee seemed to be the proper place to raise the question. However, if the Chairman would permit him to raise the question on the income tax vote, he would do so.

The TREASURER: That is the proper place to ask it.

Question put and passed.

ANALYST.

The TREASURER moved that £4,659 be granted for the "Analyst." There was a decrease in the vote of £229 as compared with last year. There were no items that called for comment.

Question put and passed.

BUREAU OF CENTRAL SUGAR MILLS.

The TREASURER moved that £1,926 be granted for the "Bureau of Central Sugar Mills." The items were the same as last year, but the amount was less by £1,000 than the vote for last year, caused by a reduction of £150 in "Travelling expenses," £100 in "Postage, telegrams, and incidental expenses," and £750 in "Inspection fees." It was not thought necessary to provide anything this year for inspections.

Mr. McCORMACK (*Cairns*) asked the Treasurer if he intended to build an accommodation house at the Babinda Mill. The Treasurer had closed all the hotels in the mill area, and he would not lease any of the land that was available, and the result was that when travellers arrived there after a 50-mile journey, at 7 o'clock at night, there was no accommodation for them. The Treasurer was the corporation, and he should make provision for accommodating the public and the men who worked there. He had received a letter from the shire council complaining about the delay on the part of the Treasurer in opening land there. The land was in the hands of the Treasurer; but it was not available for the people. If anyone felt inclined to build an accommodation house he could not do so, because the land was not available. He had received a letter from the shire council, and a similar letter had been sent to the Treasurer, asking for something to be done. He had brought the matter up months ago, and nothing had been done since. Mr. Christian offered to lease his land to anyone for £10 per acre per annum, but they were waiting for the Government land to be thrown open. He believed that the land was offered to the Government.

The TREASURER: We got no land for nothing from Mr. Christian.

Mr. McCORMACK: He understood Mr. Munro offered a block of land to the Government provided it was leased and not sold.

The TREASURER: We did not get any land offered to us.

Mr. McCORMACK: He understood that offer was not accepted, and that the land was since bought by the Government. The Treasurer took drastic action in closing up the hotels, and he should have made provision for other accommodation. The man erecting the mill found it hard to get men to work there because of the want of accommodation. The annual rainfall at Babinda was 180 inches, and some accommodation was needed. The Treasurer would not allow the land to be leased, because there was some delay in connection with the surveying. Then, sanitary accommodation was wanted in connection with the Treasurer's own mill. Typhoid fever had broken out in the last fortnight or three weeks, and some attempt should be made to provide sanitary accommodation.

The TREASURER: There has been correspondence with the shire council, and they agreed to make the necessary sanitary arrangements.

Mr. McCORMACK: The council were not in a position to do it, because the area belonged to the Treasurer. The Treasurer should have provided an accommodation house long ago. It was a commentary on his administration of sugar matters. The Treasurer should make the land available, so that these men could erect their homes, otherwise they would go further away to Mr. Christian's land and settle down there, and the township would be in a different place to what was first intended, and to what the Treasurer intended. The people of Babinda were continually complaining about the matter. There was something wrong with the planning of the town—that was the first excuse. While they were providing a beautiful town plan, the people would accept Mr. Christian's offer, and the Treasurer would not then be able to lease his land at all. The people of Babinda wanted to know what the Treasurer intended to do about it.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Cairns had referred to the want of accommodation in that particular neighbourhood, but he would remind him that there were two hotels which were not prohibited from taking in boarders. Under the Act they were prohibited from selling intoxicants, and he assumed that they rather

[10 p.m.] resented having to close, and they probably thought they would get even with the corporation for closing them up. He gathered from some correspondence that had passed that there was at present no provision made to any extent for accommodation. The hon. member had referred to the town planning of the area at Babinda. It was essential that the work should be properly done, and it had therefore been delayed, because there had been some difficulty in getting a proper survey of the township made. There was another point the Committee would appreciate; it would not have been wise, the mill not opening till 1915, to rush the settlement of the leasehold. Everything was now under way, and he hoped that the difficulties to which the hon. member had referred would

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soon be a thing of the past. When the hon. member referred to the sanitary conditions, he (Mr. Barnes) was quite sure his memory was right when he stated that the municipality had been approached, and had agreed to a certain form of work being carried out by themselves. The Treasury gave them authority, and he was surprised to hear the hon. member say that he had received a letter stating that they were waiting for instructions. Evidently there had been some mistake somewhere. It was most essential that everything should be done to prevent the spread of any disease, especially typhoid. The hon. member would appreciate that, in connection with keeping a mill going in 1915, there had to be a great deal of expedition, as it was rather a big undertaking. He took it that the Government and the contractor were having all they could possibly do to get the mill ready for the 1915 season. The matters to which the hon. member had referred would receive further consideration. He should be pleased to hear from him from time to time as to what was going on.

Question put and passed.

HARBOURS AND RIVERS.

The TREASURER moved that £2,348 be granted for "Harbours and Rivers." There was a reduction of £300 in connection with working expenses. Last year £1,800 was set down for working expenses, the actual expenditure being £1,517 0s. 5d. He regretted that, probably, on account of the war, there would be fewer ships going into the dock than there were last year.

Mr. BERTRAM said he had drawn the attention of the Treasurer on more than one occasion to the necessity of doing something to abate the nuisance caused by the smoke from the smoke-stack at the Dry Dock, but practically nothing had been done. This was a great nuisance to those who frequented the technical college and library, which were within a few yards of the dock, and also to a number of people in Dock street, whose residences were on a level with the top of the smoke-stack. He had written to the department, and was told last year that some efforts had been made to abate the nuisance, but that they had not been successful, and another effort would be made. Private firms had taken steps to prevent nuisances of this kind. Only to-day he learnt that the milling company over there had got some device which prevented the nuisance, and so had the Rosewarne Meatworks, only a few yards from the Dry Dock. He hoped that the Treasurer would give an assurance that something would be done to prevent the nuisance at the Dry Dock. He had received a communication from Messrs. Babcock and Wilcox, Limited, in which they claimed that they had a contrivance which would remedy the trouble.

The TREASURER: I have received a similar communication from that firm.

Mr. BERTRAM hoped that this firm would be successful in inducing the Treasurer to do something to wipe out the nuisance. He did not know whether anything could be done in the way of enlarging the dock just now, but the necessity for larger docking accommodation was severely felt. A large number of boats belonging to the Australian United Steamship Navigation Company and

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other companies were unable to dock in Brisbane, because of the inadequacy of the docking accommodation. The result was that thousands of pounds of work that would otherwise be done in Brisbane was being done in Sydney, much to the detriment of workmen who followed that occupation; but he supposed that under present circumstances he could not ask for an enlargement of the docking accommodation. He hoped, however, that the Treasurer would give him an assurance that some genuine effort would be made to abate the smoke nuisance.

The TREASURER: As he had previously informed the hon. member, a smoke device had been adopted, but, unfortunately, it was not a success. He should be quite willing to find out from the firm who had communicated with the Treasury what was their proposed device, and if anything could be done at a reasonable cost to remove the nuisance it would be done. The matter had already been passed on to Mr. Cullen for report.

Question put and passed.

INCOME TAX.

The TREASURER moved that £9,192 be granted for the Income Tax Department. There was a decrease of £90 in this vote.

Mr. HARDACRE: Some little time ago he brought under the notice of the Treasurer by a question certain leakages in regard to income tax, and he thought that, as the matter was one of great public importance, the Treasurer should get a special report on it. He (Mr. Hardacre) had had several conversations on the subject with the Commissioner for Income Tax, who had given the matter consideration, and the last time he saw Mr. Hughes about it, that gentleman said he had come to the conclusion that it would be very difficult to alter the phraseology of the Act so as to cover the cases of leakage. It did not seem to him (Mr. Hardacre) a difficult matter. All that was necessary was to alter the interpretation of "income," and instead of saying "income from business," make it read "gain." Gain was not necessarily income. Wages, profits, and windfalls were gains, but they need not necessarily be income, and he thought the Act should be altered so as to make it apply to all gain from whatever source.

The TREASURER: After the matter referred to by the hon. member was last raised, he had a conference with Mr. Hughes, and his opinion was that, while some little might be gained by adopting the suggestion of the hon. member, on the other hand there would be a set-off which would more than counterbalance the gain. However, as the matter had been raised again, he would give further consideration to it, and see if the Commissioner was still of the same opinion.

Question put and passed.

MARINE BOARD.

The TREASURER moved that £5,368 be granted for the "Marine Board." There was a decrease of £280 on the whole vote.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is there any reason for reducing the salary of the Shipping Master

and Inspector of Pearl-shell and Beche-de-Mer Fisheries at Thursday Island from £240 to £200?

The TREASURER: The reduction is owing to the transfer of officers.

Mr. McCORMACK wished to know if Mr. Cullen's department came in this vote. He wished to discuss the Mackay Harbour scheme.

The TREASURER: This will not be the proper place. It comes in the trust fund votes.

Mr. McCORMACK: Then he would discuss it later on.

Question put and passed.

MARINE.

The TREASURER moved that £81,224 be granted for the Marine Department. There was a decrease of £10,000 in this vote as compared with the amount voted last year, due to various reductions, the principal one being in connection with the new pilot steamer in Moreton Bay. Last year provision was made for an expenditure of £28,000, and this year there was a revote of £14,700. He was very pleased to be able to advise that the new steamer had arrived, and what was previously a source of difficulty would now disappear.

Mr. McCORMACK: He would like to refer to the matter of the Mackay harbour works. He was surprised that the Minister for Railways and the hon. member for Mirani had not risen to say something about this very important matter. The way in which the people of Mackay had been treated was a scandal. At the beginning of the session he asked the Treasurer the following questions:—

"1. Was the Mackay Harbour scheme recommended and approved of by the Harbours and Rivers Department?"

"2. Under whose supervision were the tests of foundations carried out?"

"3. Is the Mackay Harbour Board or the Harbours and Rivers Department responsible for the expenditure that occurred and has proved useless, owing to the tests not being reliable?"

To which the hon. gentleman replied—

"1. The Mackay Harbour scheme was recommended by the board of inquiry. The detail drawings were prepared by the Harbours and Rivers Department for the harbour board, tests of the foundations being first obtained.

"2. The harbour board made the tests and furnished the results to the Harbours and Rivers Department.

"3. The harbour board is responsible for all expenditure."

Some people, members of the harbour board, kicked up a bit of a row in regard to the replies, and immediately they were placated by the Minister for Railways telling them that it would be all right, that they would not be responsible for all the expense.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On what authority?

Mr. McCORMACK: His authority was a Mackay paper. He thought they should have some explanation from the Treasurer or the Harbours and Rivers Department as to the expenditure of £30,000 or £40,000 on the scheme, including the building of a small branch railway and the entering into agreements with engineers to carry out the work, the buying of steel for reinforced concrete, and the sacrificing of that amount of money, because the scheme could not be gone on with. Surely the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers would have something to say in justice to the people of Mackay! They were told that he (Mr. McCormack) was endeavouring to make political capital out of it. He was not; he was very sorry for them, and he would have liked to see them get a harbour there. Later on the Treasurer said that he was having plans prepared for another scheme.

The TREASURER: Which have been submitted.

Mr. McCORMACK: He also said that they would hold an inquiry as to who was to blame. The board had entered into an agreement with an engineer, who recently got a verdict against them in the courts, which would cost them another £2,000, perhaps. All this was due—he was prepared to be corrected—to the Harbours and Rivers Department in Brisbane. They approved of the whole thing, and the harbour board entered an expenditure of £30,000 or £40,000, and what had they got for it? They had a derrick at Flat Top, and nothing else; and the people of Mackay were asking what their representatives were doing about it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They know what their representatives are doing.

Mr. McCORMACK: They were in the court the other day, and they did not know much about their position. They fought that case because they did not understand their position. They were put in a wrong position by the department the Treasurer was administering. They had spent a considerable amount of money, and were in the position that they had nothing to show for it. The whole scheme had collapsed. There was no talk about going on with another scheme at all. The whole of the money had been wasted, and wasted because of bad administration in the Government department.

The TREASURER: I think you ought to suspend judgment until you hear the other side.

Mr. McCORMACK: The judgment the other day was surely evidence to the Treasurer that something was radically wrong with the administration of the scheme. Why did the board enter into contracts on the advice of the Chief Engineer, whose advice they were compelled to accept? There was no electioneering in the matter at all. He asked the questions months ago, because he was interested in the matter, and he had friends in Mackay who were interested. He thought that the whole matter should be inquired into. He thought at the time that it was a gigantic scheme for a place the size of Mackay to take upon itself, and he thought that Mr. Cullen would have been wise if he had gone to a great deal more trouble than he did before allowing the Mackay people to launch a scheme costing, perhaps, £500,000 before they had taken

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proper borings. It was a remarkable position for an expert to find himself in, and only one test of borings had been made at Flat Top.

The TREASURER: That is not correct.

Mr. McCORMACK: No exhaustive tests were made until the first pile was driven.

The TREASURER: I am quite prepared to lay all the papers on the table.

Mr. McCORMACK: It would be interesting to the people of Mackay, but it would have been more interesting to the people of Mackay if full information had been given before the expenditure had been incurred. They would never have found themselves engaged in a law case with an engineer who had been engaged to do work which was stopped because the foundations were bad.

The TREASURER: It was only fair to say that the members for the district were closely in touch with the matter right through and knew every step that was taken. So far as the Government were concerned, if Government officers had made a mistake in connection with the scheme, he could only repeat what he had said to the representatives of the district, that the Government should stand by that mistake and recoup them for the amount. If, on the other hand, the fault was with the people of Mackay, then it was their funeral, and it was their duty to pay the expenses in connection with the matter. He would go fully into the matter the next time the Committee were discussing the Estimates.

At 10.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under the operation of Standing Order No. 306, I now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

CO-OPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION BILL.

DISCHARGED FROM PAPER.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. White, *Musgrave*): I beg to move that this Order be discharged, and the Bill itself withdrawn.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I beg to move that the House will—

The SPEAKER: Order! Under Standing Order No. 47, the hon. member may not move a motion without notice, except by leave of the House. The question is that the hon. member be allowed to give notice of motion.

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I beg to give notice that, on Wednesday next, I shall move—

“That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for advances in aid of co-operative enterprise in connection with the manufacture and storage of primary products of agriculture.”

The House adjourned at thirty-two minutes past 10 o'clock.

[*Mr. McCormack.*]