

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 1917**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 5 DECEMBER, 1917.

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

## QUESTIONS.

## SUPREME COURT DECISIONS APPEALED FROM.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Is it a fact that he has received a communication from the Honourable the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in regard to the number of decisions affirmed and reversed on appeal from the Supreme Court to the High Court?"

"2. If so, will he place copy of the letter on the table?"

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), on behalf of the Attorney-General, replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. I now place copy of the communication referred to on the table."

## LOSSES IN CENTRAL SUGAR-MILLS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Treasurer—

"In connection with the last report upon the central mills, what is the reason for omitting certain particulars regarding losses in manufacture which have been supplied in previous years?"

The TREASURER replied—

"The particulars can be obtained from the information published in the report."

## SUPPLY.

## RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Bertram, *Maree*) presented the resolutions from Committee of Supply.

The TREASURER: I beg to move—That the resolutions be received.

Question put and passed.

The CLERK then commenced to read the resolutions covering the amounts voted for the whole of the departments of the State.

The SPEAKER: I suggest that the resolutions be taken as read.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: I beg to move—That the resolutions be now agreed to by the House.

The SPEAKER: I propose to adopt the same procedure in connection with this discussion of the various items as was adopted on previous occasions. I suggest that each member requiring to discuss a certain resolution should call out the number of that resolution, and the remaining items can be passed en bloc.

On resolution 1—"Railways, General Establishment"—

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): There is one matter to which I would like to call the attention of the Railway Department. It has come under the notice of travellers that

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*

the railway yards in country districts to-day, and during the present season, have become seedbearers for the various noxious weeds that were brought into Queensland. The seeds fall from the trucks of the various carriages and take root in the railway yards, and you will find weeds that have never been seen there before. In that way, we are sowing broadcast a lot of dangerous weeds, and if not stopped in the present season, they are going to be a big menace to the country. We know how much we have suffered in the past from neglecting to destroy noxious weeds when they first showed themselves. I sincerely hope that the Government will do something at a very early date to bring about the destruction of this menace.

Colonel RANKIN (*Burrum*): I desire to offer a few remarks about the railway administration as it affects my own district. There is a good deal in what the hon. member for Burnett has said, and complaints have been very frequent in regard to the menace which is threatened by the noxious weeds referred to. There are one or two other matters which I wish to call attention to, the first of which is the inadequate railway service obtaining in my district. For months past I have endeavoured to secure some improvement, not only on the Isis line, but also on the line from Colton to Pialba. Those are two of the best-paying branch lines, in normal times, in the State, and yet it seems to me that they have been singled out for very unfair treatment. The people have raised their voice, and the local authorities there have appealed to the Government to give a more adequate service, but so far without avail. It seems passing strange that we should have, in districts like those, a motor-car service running in competition with the railway service, but such obtains at present on the Isis branch line. If it pays private people to run a motor-car service alongside the railway line, it should surely be competent for the Railway Department to run a service which will meet the public demand. I noticed some time ago that an effort was being made to introduce a motor-car service on the railway line. I do not know the departmental name of the cars to which I refer, but some experiments were made, and, as far as I can gather, they were quite successful. A service such as that could be run economically in the districts I have mentioned, as one motorman could run the car himself. The car referred to was very much like an ordinary tramcar, built on the motor-car principle. Even that would be a great concession. Another matter which is standing very much in the way of progress are the exorbitant railway charges with respect to the traffic on the recently opened Urangan line. It seems passing strange that the freight along that line should be in some cases five times what it is between Rockhampton and Port Alma, which is a longer distance. They were both built for the purpose of giving access to a deepwater port, and if the Government are sympathetic towards the development of that port, on which a very considerable sum of public money has been spent, they should give fair and reasonable treatment in the direction I have indicated. We have all the conditions favourable for the establishment of a good port as far as anchorage and harbour facilities are concerned, and the only trouble which stands in the way is the unfair treatment in the way of railway charges. I do not think that the Government

have given that consideration to this important question which it deserves. We also find the same lack of consideration by the Government with regard to the requirements on the wharf itself. The shipping facilities there have been condemned in the strongest terms quite recently. I have condemned them in the House myself, but no steps have been taken to remedy the matter, which is of great concern in that district. I hope that some steps will be taken by the Government, first of all to get something like adequate accommodation on the jetty and transport accommodation on the two lines I have mentioned. We are anxious to develop settlement and industry, and if there is one department more than another which can give those facilities which are so essential to the wellbeing of the State, it is the Railway Department.

Another matter which I will take the opportunity of referring to is the attitude of the Railway Department regarding coal supplies. For some considerable time now the coal supplies for the Burrum district have been drawn from Ipswich—a distance of something like 200 miles. Never before in the history of the State has such a course been pursued as that adopted by the present Government in this regard. It has been said that the coal in the district is too high in price, but I think that has long ago been exploded. We know that only yesterday one of the colliery proprietors there had to close down his mine, as he was unable to carry on, after spending some thousands of pounds. He told me himself that for the last fortnight the net profits on the working of the mine, including his own labour, did not exceed £3. He said that he proposed to close down his mine altogether. Almost the same state of affairs exists at the present time at Torbanlea. A small company was formed some time ago to take up a mine at Torbanlea. They have worked it for some two or three years and have lost money all the time. They are now sick of it, and almost ready to "throw up the sponge." Hardly less serious is the position with regard to the Dundee Colliery, where they have been practically working for months past from hand to mouth. At the other coalmine—the Queensland Colliery Company—although a larger concern the position is not very much better. I think you will agree with me that, so far as the price charged for the coal is concerned, it is more than justified by the result that has obtained in that district. If the Government are going to be a party to ruining those industries merely because they have some ulterior object in view, then I must raise my voice in protest against it. There is no doubt that the attitude of the Government during the last two years to the collieries in my district has been disgraceful. They have already driven one mine out of business, they are driving a second mine out of business—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman must confine himself to the Railway Department.

Colonel RANKIN: I am dealing with the railway vote.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman must not wander all over the country.

Colonel RANKIN: I think this is one of the most important matters in the Railway Department. Without coal the trains are not going to run very far.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may refer incidentally to the coal supply, but I will not allow him to discuss coal propositions all over Queensland.

Colonel RANKIN: I have no desire to deal with the coal propositions all over Queensland, but I submit that I am in order in dealing with the attitude of the Railway Department towards coal suppliers, and more particularly in the district with which I am associated. I am in order in pointing out that the attitude of the Government with regard to the colliery proprietors in this district has been such as to drive them out of trade altogether, and has practically assisted in ruining them. That is a question of most vital importance to my district. I think that we deserve some statement from the department as to their future attitude in that direction. I know that we will be told there are some orders outstanding which have not been supplied for the last twelve months. You will note that I have not made any reference to that colliery. I have only referred to other collieries—for the reason that they were so disgusted with the treatment meted out to them by the Ryan Government that they refused to have anything to do with them. On the other hand, they were able to keep up their supplies from other sources. I hope that some endeavour will be made by the Government to secure fair treatment for these people. The Government claim to be desirous of developing our industry and upholding the prosperity of the State. They claim to be sympathetic towards our primary producers. Here is an opportunity in which they may occupy themselves to great advantage. I do not know of any industry that will give a greater revenue to the Railway Department than the coal industry. The rates obtained are very considerable. We know there is very little labour so far as the department is concerned in the carriage of coal; they have simply to remove the trucks containing the coal from one point of the line to another. If they are desirous of assisting not merely colliery proprietors but also of adding to the revenue of the most important public utility—the railways—here is an opportunity of showing their sympathy in a practical manner.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): Everyone must admit that it is an important matter to the Railway Department as to where they can get their coal supplies. I have repeated before, and I say again, that each district should supply coal to the railway. It does not matter what district it is, they should supply coal to the men working in the district. I made it my business to see what was the reason why this was not done at the Burrum. I have been informed that the Railway Department have orders standing back to last December which were not supplied by the Burrum district. The men in that district are working every day, and they cannot supply an ounce of coal more than what they are doing to the Railway Department, so that the department cannot obtain the coal they require from that district, and that is the reason they have to get it from other districts. I say distinctly that there has been no one driven out of the trade at the Burrum.

Colonel RANKIN: One mine closed down the day before yesterday.

Mr. GLEDSON: I contradict the hon. member for Burrum when he says a mine

*Mr. Gledson.]*

has been closed down because the Railway Department refused to take coal.  
 [4 p.m.] I give that an emphatic denial. I challenge the hon. member for Burrum to prove that that mine closed down because the Railway Department refused to take coal.

Colonel RANKIN: I accept your challenge, and I will prove it.

Mr. GLEDSON: On Saturday last I was in the Burrum and Howard districts, and I made full inquiries as to how the mines were working there, and I was informed that the mine that had closed down had closed down for other reasons.

Colonel RANKIN: Give us the reasons.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Burrum may try to tell his electors that the Railway Department are refusing to take their coal, but I tell him, as I told him previously, that they have orders which have been outstanding since last December, and which that district has not supplied. Why does not the hon. member for Burrum tell the truth to the people?

Colonel RANKIN: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in saying I am not telling the truth?

The SPEAKER: I did not understand the hon. member to say that.

Colonel RANKIN: He said the hon. member for Burrum was not telling the truth.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: He said nothing of the sort.

Colonel RANKIN: What have you to do with it? Mind your own business.

The SPEAKER: Order! Do I understand the hon. member for Ipswich to say that the hon. member for Burrum was not telling the truth?

Mr. GLEDSON: What I said was, "Why cannot the hon. member tell the truth to the people?"

The SPEAKER: I would point out that it is unparliamentary for an hon. member to say that another hon. member is telling an untruth, and the hon. member should withdraw it if he made such a statement.

Mr. GLEDSON: I do not wish to say anything that is unparliamentary, and if I said anything unparliamentary I am willing to withdraw it. I want the House to know just what is the truth in connection with this matter. I do not want to say anything that is going to hurt any hon. member, but the position is that these companies were not able to supply their orders, and the Railway Department had to procure the coal from elsewhere. They cannot run the railways without coal.

Colonel RANKIN: You ask the proprietors about it.

Mr. GLEDSON: I did ask the proprietors. It is only a fortnight or three weeks ago since I sat in court with the proprietors of that district, and I asked them if they were getting sufficient orders, and the proprietor of the Torbanlea Mine said he could supply more coal if he could get it out. He put the whole position before the court, and said it was costing him so much, and that he could supply more coal if he could get it out. The hon. member for Burrum said this Government is attempting to ruin the coal industry in that district. The hon. member

[Mr. Gledson.

knows that that is not so. The Government have driven no one out of the coal industry. The Government have spent more money in the Burrum district in putting bores down to try and foster the industry than was ever spent by any previous Government. Although the hon. member was a member of the Cabinet of a previous Government, they did not put any bores down to assist the coal industry there. Bores have been put down by this Government practically on the borders of the Queensland Colliery Company's ground in order to test that ground, and as a result I have been given to understand that further development is taking place, and I understand that the company with which the hon. member for Burrum has been connected is going to sink a shaft in close proximity to where those bores had been put down.

Colonel RANKIN: That is just about as true as your other statements.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the hon. member that if he wants the Speaker to protect him against a charge of untruth being levelled at him, he must not use those expressions himself. He has told the hon. member for Ipswich that what he said is untrue, and a few minutes ago he rose to a point of order because the hon. member for Ipswich said he was not speaking the truth.

Colonel RANKIN: I did not say he was stating an untruth.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out that the mere fact of an hon. member saying a statement is untrue is not unparliamentary. The Speaker is not responsible for any member making statements whether they are true or otherwise. If one hon. member says a thing is untrue, and another hon. member says it is true, surely the House does not expect the Speaker to decide which is true and which is not true. I hope hon. members will continue the debate without charging each other with speaking untruths.

Mr. GLEDSON: There is no need for a heated argument over this thing. I want the House to understand what is the true position. If one hon. member gets up and makes a statement which another hon. member can refute, it is his duty to get up and tell the House the true position. I do not want to cloud the issue, but when the charge is levelled at this Government that they want to ruin the coal industry in that district, and that they had already driven one company out of the trade, and were trying to drive other companies out, it is necessary that some hon. member should put the facts before the people of the country. That is all I am endeavouring to do. The Railway Department have had to get their coal from other districts, because they could not get regular supplies from the Burrum. I would point out also that the Railway Department have been made a convenience of by those mines for a number of years past, especially by the Queensland Colliery Company. When they had no other trade they stacked the coal in the railway yards and made storing grounds of them, and when they required coal for other purposes they left the Railway Department without any. The department has done all they possibly can to foster the coal trade in that district, and the Government have assisted all they can.

Colonel RANKIN: To kill them; that is about what they have done.

Mr. GLEDSON: Not to kill them. They are working better now than ever.

Colonel RANKIN: The output has dropped by two-thirds.

Mr. GLEDSON: The output has dropped because certain mines closed down owing to being worked out; and they are attempting now to sink new shafts.

Colonel RANKIN: What mine is worked out of coal?

Mr. GLEDSON: The Queensland Colliery Company's No. 5 shaft was closed down because of the pillars.

Colonel RANKIN: The Queensland Colliery Company's No. 5 shaft is working to-day.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am going on the information supplied to me by the manager of the mine. I would like the Government to take strong steps to prevent the railway refreshment-rooms allowing bottled drinks to be taken on the trains on Sundays. That is a question that the Government ought to take a firm hold of and do something to prevent the people taking bottled beer out of the refreshment-rooms on Sunday. As far as I can learn, trippers have come along and have bought beer and other things and taken them into the trains. That ought to be prohibited altogether, and I ask the Government to look into those statements and try and prevent that sort of thing if they possibly can.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): The matter just mentioned by the last speaker certainly wants looking into. I have known of men carrying half a dozen bottles of beer into a train and making themselves a regular nuisance. You might just as well have beer and spirits sold in the train. I have seen it handed to soldiers, and that sort of thing should be put a stop to.

The object of building our railways was to open up the country, but we find that under the present Government our railways are made the means of ruining country industries by carrying material from the capital already manufactured into the country, and thereby impoverishing the industries in the country. I refer to timber and manufactured joinery and that kind of thing, which is carried into the interior by the railways, which practically robs the people in the interior of a great deal of the work that they used to get. I certainly object to our railways being made the means of injuring industries in the country to bolster up the cities.

The Government has put itself outside the law as regards the Industrial Court. Any private employer paying two men a different rate of wages for the same work, or paying a lower rate than the award of the court, is liable to a fine for every day he continues to pay it, and he is liable to a fine of at least £20 for paying a different rate of wages.

The TREASURER: The Government are carrying out the award.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I make this statement—that you have two men working side by side, doing the same class of work and working the same number of hours, and one is paid £19 14s. a year less than the other.

The TREASURER: That is done under the award.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There is nothing to prevent you paying the one the same as the other. There is a great principle at

stake. The Federal Government and the State Government have said times out of number that they would have judges to carry out their wishes. No private employer can get a judge to give an award providing for two different rates of wages for two men working side by side and doing the same class of work. Can you get a judge that would give an award in a colliery providing for a different rate of wages for two men working at the same class of work? Could you get a judge who would give an award in regard to any industry under which one man would get £20 a year less than another man doing the same class of work? We know that the employers are heavily fined if they do not pay the wages fixed by the Industrial Arbitration Court. Yet here we have the Railway Department employing 600 men at this low, sweated wage, and they have endeavoured by every power possible to take away from them the right to vote and take away the secrecy of the ballot.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the hon. gentleman should discuss the vote before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This money is used for this purpose, and I am quite in order in discussing it now.

The SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will take notice of my call to order. He must discuss the specific vote before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am discussing No. 2.

The SPEAKER: Order! We are dealing with No. 1.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will discuss it on No. 2 later.

The SPEAKER: Order! I can assure the hon. member that I shall not allow him to repeat the same arguments when discussing resolution No. 2. The hon. member must connect his remarks with the "Railway Department—General Establishment." If he does that, he will be in order.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This money is used for this purpose. I am pointing out that the Government have done everything possible to compel these men to join the union.

The SPEAKER: I would suggest that the hon. gentleman would be more in order in discussing that matter on the vote for the Industrial Arbitration Court.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can prove that these men have been prevented from using their votes as they wished to do.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman will have to prove that the Administration had something to do with it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can prove that men are deprived of £20 a year because they will not join a certain union.

The SPEAKER: That is more a matter for the Industrial Court vote. The hon. gentleman has not yet connected his remarks with the resolution before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am pointing out that this money is being spent to pay certain men in the Railway Department £20 a year more than other men. We also know that men have to vote in a certain way or go out of the union.

Mr. WEIR: Bunkum!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This money is being used to destroy the secrecy of the ballot.

[*Mr. Bebbington.*]

The men are compelled to join a union, and if they will not join they lose £20 a year. I think that every man has a right to vote in the way he pleases, and he should not be prevented from doing so by the Government. That is one of the reasons why I object to this vote. We know that a private member cannot move to increase a vote, but the Treasurer can do so, and he should pay these other men the same rate that he pays the men belonging to the union. I understand that these men have formed a union between themselves, but every effort is being made to prevent them from being registered and getting their rights. I will leave no stone unturned until I see these men get the wages due to them.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): The hon. member for Ipswich controverted the position taken up by the hon. member for Burrum in regard to the treatment of the mines in the Burrum district. On looking at the business-paper for the 1st August of this year I find that the following question was asked by the hon. member for Burrum:—

“BUNDAMBA COAL USED ON THE MARYBOROUGH RAILWAYS.

“Colonel RANKIN (*Burrum*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. The ordinary railway freight per ton on coal between Bundamba and Maryborough.

2. The quantity of Bundamba coal purchased by the department for use on the Maryborough district railways for the twelve months ended 30th June last?

3. The present price paid for Bundamba coal at pits?

4. The price at which coal has been offered to the department by the Torbanlea Colliery, Torbanlea, and the Dundee Colliery, Howard?”

“THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

1. 18s. per ton.

2. 35,219 tons.

3. 12s. 6d. per ton.

4. 16s. per ton.”

Anyone looking at that question will see that a cost of £25,533 was incurred by the Government during the period of twelve months to penalise the Howard and Torbanlea mines. That was the extra amount that it cost to take the coal from Ipswich to work the railways in the Maryborough district over and above the cost that the coal could have been obtained for from the local collieries. In the earlier part of the present session the hon. member for Ipswich practically admitted that the reason for that was that the Howard Colliery did not employ unionists. I say that there is no justification whatever for putting the country to such a large expenditure of money, particularly in times like these, for such a reason. It is a scandalous thing. I ask the hon. member for Ipswich does he think that is likely to encourage the mining industry? Is that sort of treatment calculated to encourage the mining industry in the Burrum district. The hon. member says that the Government are not acting in a way to discourage the Burrum district, but what is the meaning of that particular action to which I have referred if it does not discourage that district?

Mr. GLEDSON: I can tell you that every miner working at Burrum is a unionist.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Railway Commissioner drawing his supply of coal from

[*Mr. Bebbington.*

Ipswich meant that the Burrum miners gradually found their way down to the Ipswich coalfields. The hon. member for Burrum told us that there was a nice little township established there, with a local school of arts, and all the surroundings of a happy settlement, and it was all broken up through the callous attitude of the Government to the coalminers in that particular district. For political purposes such a thing is scandalous. The hon. member for Ipswich says that orders were more recently given by the Government which could not be supplied. Those orders were given after a number of men had gone away from the coalfields, and when orders were pressing on the companies at the busy period to such an extent that they could not supply the 72 tons per day asked for. Let us have something like fair play. Let us have the facts as they are, and not have them admitted to-day and contradicted to-morrow. The records show what the facts are.

\* Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): The question of the Burrum coal has been raised, and it is only right to let the House know the position from our standpoint. I quite agree that a district has the right to supply all the coal required in that area, and I say that that rule has been recognised to a greater extent by the present Government than any previous Government. At the same time, I say that no Government department can depend on an inadequate and insecure supply. During my time in Maryborough, extending over a number of years, I know that the Railway Department there has always been a dumping ground for the coal from the mines of the Queensland Colliery Company. They always sent their surplus coal to the Railway Department. On several occasions when I was there we were oversupplied with coal, and yet I heard telephone messages coming from Howard asking us to take more coal. It was no use our taking more coal than we wanted, because it only deteriorated at a considerable rate. If we refused to take the coal then, later on we would get a message from Brisbane, no doubt inspired from a certain source, telling us to take the extra coal from Howard. That is what the Howard people want to do. They want to send their coal to the Railway Department whether it is required or not, when they cannot dispose of it elsewhere, and they can only blame themselves for the position they are in to-day. I have the Maryborough “Chronicle” of the 13th August, which gives the figures in connection with coal ordered and supplied at Maryborough.

The SPEAKER: If the matter is apropos of the vote, I will allow the hon. member to quote it.

Mr. WEIR: It is apropos of the vote, as it relates to the quantity of coal supplied to the Railway Department in Maryborough by the Howard proprietors—

“January, 1916, ordered, 1,872 tons; supplied, 1,525 tons. February, 1916, ordered, 1,950 tons; supplied, 779 tons. March, 1916, ordered, 972 tons; supplied, 749 tons. April, 1916, ordered, 1,000 tons; supplied, 1,190 tons.”

That was the only occasion where they supplied more than was ordered.

“May, 1916, ordered, nil; supplied, 119 tons. June-September, 1916, ordered, nil; supplied, nil. October, 1916, ordered, 1,872 tons; supplied, 1,199 tons. November, 1916, ordered, 1,872 tons; supplied,

32 tons. December, 1916, ordered, 1,872 tons; supplied, nil."

It would be absolutely impossible for any department run on business lines to depend on the supplies of coal unless the full amount ordered is supplied. If any department is going to be worked on these lines, particularly the Railway Department, which uses approximately 100 tons per day at Maryborough, they will not go very far. I am one of those who believe that all our coal required in that district should be supplied from the Howard. It is a bad policy to take coal from Ipswich.

Colonel RANKIN: Did you yourself not endeavour to get some orders in the Ipswich district?

Mr. WEIR: I would do the same thing to-morrow.

Colonel RANKIN: If you tried, does not that show that the Government were not sympathetic?

Mr. WEIR: I would do that, but I would inform the public that the hon. gentleman and others were not honestly trying to supply the orders to the Railway Department [4.30 p.m.] ment which they had obtained. Surely, if they had orders for 1,800 tons a month they should do better than supply only 30 or 40 tons in two months.

Colonel RANKIN: What is the object of your endeavouring to get orders elsewhere if these collieries are already working?

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member is trying to draw me off the track, but he alone is responsible for the position in which he finds himself. The hon. member told the House that another colliery in the Burrum district closed down because the Railway Department would not give them any orders.

Colonel RANKIN: The owner of that mine told me so on Monday, when he came to see me.

Mr. WEIR: Sometimes we do not get all that owners tell one another; we only get one side. I am repeating the statements made to me, that if the Railway Department would give this colliery an order for coal they were prepared to drop their price by so much per ton. Something was done, of which I know nothing, and the result of that was that the colliery went back on their offer. With regard to the Queensland Collieries Company at Howard, the hon. member for Burrum knows more about that, and I will confine my arguments to that matter.

Colonel RANKIN: I did not refer to them at all.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member is bolstering up the wrong case. I am prepared to put the trouble at the door of the Queensland Collieries Company at Howard. There is also a letter here from the same issue of 10th August, signed by John Gennon, the chairman of the Howard Mining Union, verifying the statements made by the hon. member for Ipswich, and deprecating the attitude adopted by the hon. member for Burrum, who, at that time, was saying that the mines at Howard were suffering from want of sympathy on the part of the Government, that the mineowners were being driven out of the industry, and complaining about the fact that the patriotism of the district was draining the district of the workers. I do not propose to deal any further with that.

The hon. member for Drayton had made an attack in connection with the Railway

Department. There are many statements he makes that we do not take seriously, but a statement like this should be taken seriously. The hon. member for Drayton did not stick to facts. At the present time the recent award rates are only applicable to the seven unions, whose members were cited before the court.

Mr. GLEDSON: Fifteen unions.

Mr. WEIR: I accept the hon. member's correction. At all events, it was confined to the scope of the number of unions who presented their case before the court. The friends of the hon. member for Drayton were not sufficiently interested in their own welfare, and in not going to the court they are like men who do not see fit to join a friendly society. Surely they have no right if they have not contributed anything to the fight to ask where their share is.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: They have contributed to the work.

Mr. WEIR: We know they do the work. We know they have another method of getting increases. They do not go before the court, but take the method adopted by the hon. member for Wide Bay, who bolstered up the case of one man who said he would have nothing to do with the union. Twenty-four hours afterwards we find him sneaking into a union to protect his hide. The people of whom the hon. member for Drayton speaks prefer to crawl to the bosses for their increases rather than adopt the manly attitude of the unionist, who takes his case to the court. The aspersion cast by the hon. member for Drayton on the railway unions is not based on facts.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He was absent one or two days when the railway Estimates were discussed, and he wanted to raise the question of the Railway Department taking over certain land in the Enoggera district, and dealing very harshly with the owners of that land. According to the strict letter of the law, perhaps the department were right, but the owners who had arranged for subdividing the land refrained from doing so at the request of the department, in order to save possible expense to the department. The department eventually took possession of the land by virtue of a provision in a very old title deed, and gave no compensation whatever, which was very unjust. All the people received was £700 for the land. I do not know whether that is the way the department intends to proceed in all cases. I know the Government are considering the question of resuming the Trades Hall, the land in connection with which had cost the trustees nothing, and I wonder if the Government will deal with the Trades Hall as they did with these individuals. I hope that the Government will reconsider the case and see that justice is meted out.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): Before the resolution went through, he had a grievance to ventilate regarding his electorate. One was with reference to a closed gate at 8 miles 33 chains on the Pinkenba branch. This level crossing had been there since the railway was constructed, and a lot of people in the neighbourhood had been put to very great inconvenience through the closure of the gate. He had interviewed the railway authorities on the matter, but understood that the gates were to remain closed. He would ask the Minister to bring the matter before the department, and see that no injustice was done to the residents of Pinkenba and the

*Mr. Petrie.*]

surrounding locality. He had another grievance dating back to the time before the late Government went out of power. That was with reference to the bad state of the Clayfield and Hendra railway platforms. As far back as 1914, he asked the following question, vide p. 1022 of "Hansard" for 1914—of the Secretary for Railways—

"With the increased traffic and to give safer and better accommodation to the travelling public—

1. Is it the intention of the Railway Department to proceed this or early next year with the duplication of the line from Eagle Junction to Pinkenba, or at least as far as Ascot?

2. If so, will the stations and platforms at Eagle Junction, Clayfield, Hendra, and those beyond Ascot to Pinkenba be improved—First, by constructing an island platform, with up-to-date buildings at Eagle Junction; secondly, by doing away with the low-level crossing at Clayfield, and constructing extended high-level platforms with better accommodation at this station, also to do similar work at the Hendra Station; thirdly, to raise and extend the platforms and improve the station buildings at Doomben, Whinstanes, Eagle Farm, and other stations along this line as far as Pinkenba?"

"The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, Mackay) replied—

"1 and 2. The department think it is desirable to carry out some of the works mentioned. The plans and estimates are prepared, but it is unlikely that the funds necessary to carry out same will be available in the near future."

Since then he had approached the present Government, but nothing had been done. Some time ago he interviewed the Railway Department and obtained the following statistics of the number of passengers and traffic between Ascot, Hendra, and Clayfield railway stations for 1915-16—

—	No of Passengers.	Revenue.	TONNAGE OF GOODS.		TOTAL REVENUE.
			Outwards.	Inwards.	Outwards.
		£			£
Ascot ...	60,210	3,790	63	5,296	3,865
Hendra ...	97,578	1,181	1	14	1,205
Clayfield	63,814	635	1	5	940

He would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the bad state of these stations. They were practically dangerous. He had had several interviews with the Commissioner for Railways regarding the duplication of the line to Ascot. On race days that line is fairly dangerous, and the Commissioner admits that the duplication is necessary, but I understand that, although he has had the amount placed on the Estimates, for some reason or other it is always wiped out. I notice that the Minister has announced that the department is going to carry out some big alterations at the Brunswick Street and Bowen Hills stations. I think those alterations are very necessary, and I am glad to know that those improvements are going to be made. I would urge that some consideration be given to that portion of the

[Mr. Petrie.

railway from Eagle Junction as far as Ascot. The late Government did not do all they should have done so far as the alterations required are concerned, but that is no reason why the delay should still go on. Something ought to be done, not only for the sake of the many people down there, but from the point of view that there may be an accident at any time. If some one met with an accident down there, the railway would be let in for a considerable amount of damages, which would cost them more than what is required to carry out the alteration. I did not get up with any intention of delaying these resolutions, but I think I have had the opportunity now of bringing in a grievance which has been a long-standing one. I am sorry the Minister for Railways is not present this afternoon to hear what I say. I know I have the sympathy of the Commissioner for Railways, and I believe some of his officers, that something should be done in the direction of making these long-wanted improvements in connection with the various stations I have already mentioned from Eagle Junction to Ascot. I would like to see the duplication some day or other extend right to Pinkenba. I know the late Government entered on a scheme by resuming all that ground from the Hamilton to Pinkenba of some day or other utilising that frontage for wharfage purposes. I know a large sum of money has been spent in that direction, and I think the intention was to bring the railway line from Pinkenba along the bank of those wharves and then join somewhere at Ascot. I do not know whether that has not been partly the reason for some of the delay in regard to the alterations I have referred to, but it is necessary that something should be done, and I hope, at all events, that if something is not soon done, to bring a deputation to wait on the Minister and Commissioner for Railways to draw their attention again to the disgraceful state of these stations, and in the interest of the travelling public and in the interests of the lines that something should be done on the lines I have indicated.

Resolution 1 agreed to.

On resolution 2—"Railways, Southern Division?"—

Mr. SWAYNE said: I wish to draw the attention of the House to the extraordinary, and I may say unjust principle, that has lately been initiated by the Railway Department. When this vote was before the Committee it had not come to our knowledge that the Railway Department had adopted the practice of discriminating in their rates of pay, that they paid different rates of wages for exactly the same work. For instance, we know now there might be two men gate-keeping or signalling or working in the workshop doing precisely the same work, and doing it just as well, yet one of those men receives less than the other. Nobody can say such a thing is right. Of course, I can quite understand the excuse is some action of the Industrial Court, but the Industrial Court does not say you shall not pay over a certain rate, and no matter what the award may be in connection with some of the employees, it does not prevent the department from paying more money to others if they think their work is worth it. I take it that the remuneration of this work was settled by the court because it considered it a fair rate of pay and anything under would be unjust to the workers. I take the stand that the Government has no right to



discriminate between various sections of the community. All it had to take into cognisance is the work that is done and pay a fair standard of wage for that particular class of work. Everybody who does that work is equally entitled to the same wage. I think that is a fair contention, and I cannot understand any process of reasoning that arrives at any other conclusion than that work of the same value should be paid for at the same wage, no matter who performs it. Of course, it may be urged that those who will receive this preferential treatment have done some service outside for which they will be remunerated, but I do not think that that can be shown. Of course, I know in the past unionism has afforded distinct benefits and has been a good thing, but there are many people now who are afraid that it is going too far altogether, and I certainly think that the State is going out of the way to subsidise in any way the members of any one organisation against others who do not belong to it. Whether it is right that people should join these organisations is not for the State to say; that is a matter to be decided between the workmen themselves. Further, I say that events lately have brought us to the conclusion that these organisations are arriving at such a stage and have attained such a pitch that they have become a menace to the community.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question before the House is not whether the unions are a menace to the community. The hon. gentleman is endeavouring to discuss something else under cover of this resolution, and I do not intend to allow him to do so.

Mr. SWAYNE: I would like to draw your attention to the vote we are discussing. The resolution is that—

The SPEAKER: Order! I know the vote quite as well as the hon. gentleman, and there is no necessity to read it.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is to pay salaries and contingencies in connection with the railways, Southern division, and I think you must admit that the practice I am referring to obtains under this vote.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is setting out to give the House a dissertation on unionism, and that is not in this vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: What I am doing is pointing out how wrong the Government are in making distinctions between two sections of the community.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member was not interrupted by me when he was doing that.

Mr. SWAYNE: We have been told the reason for doing it, and I am showing that that reason is not a right one, and that anything that is done in this way by which any one section of the community is entitled to any privilege over another section of the community is wrong. I think that is perfectly fair, and, further, I am going to show that these organisations have now attained the pitch that they have become a menace.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member in going further on those lines will not be in order. The hon. gentleman must connect his remarks with the vote before the House.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think if you will listen you will find that I am. I am condemning the practice that now obtains in the Railway Department, and I am giving my reasons

for condemning that practice, and I am pointing out where it is likely to bring about ill-effects to the community. I am doing that, and surely I must be allowed to state my reasons for coming to that opinion, and anyone who has watched events in Australia in the last few months—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member desires a discussion on the question of those events he would have to move a motion to that effect. I am not going to allow abstract discussions on a question that may be in a remote way connected with the Railway Department.

Mr. SWAYNE: Unfortunately, this is far from being an abstract question to the people of Queensland.

The SPEAKER: It is abstract so far as this vote is concerned.

Mr. SWAYNE: It seems to me that we have been allowed very little room for argument. If I state an opinion, surely I may be allowed to give my reasons for holding that opinion, and I have expressed the opinion that it is not only unjust, but it is also injurious to the community that this practice should obtain, and I am fortified in that opinion by certain facts that have lately happened as showing it is a dangerous thing, especially in a democratic country where there is no excuse for it, and where every man and woman has a vote, to allow such powers as are now held by these organisations to be so exercised, when we know they are under the control of small cliques and coteries.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is discussing a matter altogether outside the vote. The question as to whether these organisations have certain powers or not has nothing to do with the vote to defray the cost of salaries and contingencies of the head office of the Railway Department.

Mr. SWAYNE: The point I have raised depends to a great extent upon whether it is likely to be beneficial or the reverse to the community, and I am endeavouring to show that it is likely to be injurious to the community, and at times a danger, and at times, unfortunately, a distinct loss to the community.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman must surely recognise that that has nothing to do with the vote before the House.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Government are encouraging such a state of things. We all know that those in receipt of the money embodied in the resolution are the officers of the railway service, and we know what recently happened in regard to the railway service. We all know that, although an award has been made granting an increase of £450,000 in wages, our railways were held up owing to a dispute outside of Queensland, with which nobody in this State had anything to do. We know we could not get stuff down to New South Wales, and the farmers' produce was held up at Wallangarra, and on the Northern railways we could not get our cane to the mills. Let me say the large body of the rank and file recognised they have got beyond the limit, and they are not at all sympathetic when they are brought out in such a case as I am alluding to against their will. That proves that such a state of things is being allowed or being encouraged, and that very great loss has accrued to Queensland. Quite recently we know that sugar-cane had to remain on the ground, and portion of it was

*Mr. Swayne.]*

lost, on account of their hold on our railway service, and I say it is not the place of the Government to encourage such a state of things as that, let alone subsidise it. The place of the State is to pay every man what he is worth quite regardless of any other matter, and regardless whether he belonged to any particular body or not: if the work is equally good, the pay should be equal for that work. I further say that this invidious treatment of one section of the community as against another is bringing about a state of things that is becoming dangerous, and has already lost a considerable amount of money to the State. I know that the idea is that all the transport workers should be banded together in one big union, so that at any one moment, at the behest of those who hold the strings, the executives, they can hang up the industrial life of the State, and I say that position is dangerous. It is a threat to the whole community. For instance, as bearing this out, I have here an extract from a speech made by Mr. Beeby on this subject. He says, in regard to the endeavour to band the transport workers together—

The SPEAKER: Order! An endeavour to band the transport workers together has nothing to do with this vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: We are discussing one section of transport workers now.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They are included in what you say.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will take notice of me, and not of the hon. member for Toowong.

Mr. SWAYNE: As a rule, I don't take notice of interjections from either side of the House, because sometimes they are not relevant; but I think that any speaker is allowed to listen to relevant interjections—

[5 p.m.] which, most certainly, was that of the hon. member for Toowong. I was going to point out the danger that arises to the community at large through the organisation of such industries as this one being voted for—as is very clearly pointed out by Mr. Beeby. Commenting upon—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. gentleman thinks he is going to get round my ruling by incidentally mentioning this vote for that purpose, he is making a mistake, I assure him.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have no desire to do anything of that kind.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman, throughout the whole of his speech, has been trying to evade my ruling. He knows quite well that he is out of order. I ask him to confine his remarks to that vote, or I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is really no use my going on if that is the case. I am criticising adversely the Government for bringing in being or subsidising those organisations.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The hon. gentleman is not criticising the Government at all. He is endeavouring to build an argument on a question of organisation of labour—which is not before the House at all.

Mr. SWAYNE: Because, as it so happens, that comes into the question. If that did not come into the question I should not refer to it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot permit the hon. gentleman, or any other hon.

[Mr. Swayne.

member, to drag in everything that may be remotely connected with the vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: The vote is money payment for a certain branch of railway workers, and in that branch a distinction is made, I understand, with some 600 men, who get less for the same work than their fellows.

The SPEAKER: While the hon. gentleman keeps on that he is quite in order.

Mr. SWAYNE: You must recognise that in making a case you have to go outside for illustrations, for points to strengthen your case. I can quite understand the Treasurer's pleasure at my not being allowed to get this in. He knows very well—and the Ministry know—that they have not a leg to stand on, on the principle of common justice, in this distinction between two bodies of workers. If the work done by one man is of the same value as that done by another, he should receive the same value for it. I may say that I asked a question of the Minister for Railways the other day as to whether there was any difference in the value of the work. He made a sort of evasive reply, endeavouring to convey the fact that there was. Now, I may say this—that it never has been the case, and recently it has been distinctly disproved. We all know that in New South Wales lately those who took the place of the men who went out on strike did their work so well that one man was doing the same amount as two men were doing before. We know that that occurred particularly in the case of the meatworks, and also in many other branches of occupation. The half-hearted reply which the Minister for Railways gave me the other day was completely disproved by what happened there. My reason for taking the stand I do in the matter is not that I don't recognise the benefits arising from unionism. I believe in unionism. But I am also a democrat, and I don't believe in privilege for any one class. I believe that as far as the State is concerned it should treat all alike, and make no distinction in payment or anything of that kind. The member for Mount Morgan told us that, as far as those bodies are concerned, they are quite able to take care of themselves in this matter; and therefore it is simply for the sake of bolstering up their own political supporters that this thing is being done. According to their supporters, it is unnecessary. Any reasonable man, whether he belongs to a union or not, will acknowledge that privilege is detrimental. In the long run it is going to come back on their own heads; and it is a thing any honest man cannot approve of.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I wish to point out that in my own electorate there are instances of where the railway is losing revenue. I pointed out to the department the necessity for erecting facilities for trucking stock. I am speaking now with reference to the Tara Railway. There are large numbers of stock coming to given points on these lines. There is a railway running past, but there are no facilities of any kind for loading, with the result that people have to walk their stock in some cases 20 or 30 miles to the nearest trucking station, which is at Dalby. That is not only an inconvenience and a direct loss to the men who have to do that, but it is an indirect loss to the railway, which would get the revenue. If the department is going to continue in that parsimonious way—which, to my mind, is being penny wise and pound foolish—they cannot expect these small country lines to prosper,

because they have of necessity to look to the freights that are being got from stock towards the making of the necessary revenue for carrying on the concern. In regard to the administration generally, it seems to me that there should be economic administration. I think the figures of last year showed us that, notwithstanding the fact that the railways ran something like 8,000 paying miles less than they did the previous year, it was necessary for something like 700 men in addition to be employed to do the work. That only spells disaster, and must naturally end in insolvency.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Where were the 700 employed?

Mr. VOWLES: Some of them, I understand, in connection with the railway refreshment rooms—I believe they come under the number of employees. The figures showed there were something like 700, in round numbers, more than there were previously.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Don't you know that those places were occupied by the employees of private enterprise previously?

Mr. VOWLES: How many hands are represented by the railway refreshment rooms?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are not employing any more than there were previously.

Mr. VOWLES: I know that at my own railway station—Dalby—we do about half the trade we did about four years ago, and we have double the number of hands. I would like the Minister to explain that. The same state of affairs exists at other stations. I do not see how the Railway Department can be expected to prosper. There is another matter which everybody probably will have noticed; that is the system of broaching that is going on in the Railway Department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would be glad to submit your remarks to the general manager of the railway refreshment rooms.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not talking about the refreshment rooms.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, you are.

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking about your goods shed. Don't you misrepresent me. I am talking about this dumping place for good old Labour supporters—the people who are there and have no work to do and yet get paid.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot get away from the statement you made.

Mr. VOWLES: If there has been any misunderstanding about it, I am not referring to the refreshment rooms.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You said we were doing twice the business there with half the staff four years ago.

Mr. VOWLES: In the Railway Department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; in the refreshment rooms.

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking about the goods shed—that dumping ground; that benevolent institution for all unionists who never do any work and draw their pay. It transpired quite recently in the courts of Brisbane, and the case originated from Dalby, that there is a systematic pilfering of goods going on. Whether the department connives at it or not I cannot say. I am one of the victims myself. I sent a parcel through the Railway Department about two months ago to Brisbane. I hold a receipt for it, and nobody can tell me what has become of it. I understand that the practice

with a booked parcel is that every person who handles it must give a receipt for it. Not only can they not give me the information, but they refuse to give me any report on it, notwithstanding the fact that I have asked three times.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How long ago has this happened?

Mr. VOWLES: Two months ago. They absolutely refused to give me a report in Dalby. He is an acting stationmaster there, and I can only get it from him if he gets instructions from headquarters to do it. That is a pretty state of affairs. And mine is not the only case. Almost every consignment of goods—more particularly liquor—that comes into the railway yards is tampered with. There is a systematic broaching of cargo going on the whole time. Now, what happens? A witness, in giving evidence in court, says there was a system of terrorising going on; they were afraid to split on their pals; they knew it, and had to be a party to it. It was commented on by the police magistrate, and the sooner the Minister and his department look into this and have a general cleaning out of those wasters who do not work and are there for what they can get out of the public the better it will be for the public and his department. I don't mean to say that the Minister would be a party to those sort of things; but this is going on and it should be necessary that he have detectives to catch those men. It is going on all over the Western line. It is becoming notorious that it is most unsafe to send any article of value through the railway unless you insure it. Why the Commissioner should insist on their insuring in order to take the responsibility of a common carrier I do not know, why he should be privileged in that direction.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Does the ordinary carrier carry at the same rate as the railway?

Mr. VOWLES: It is not a question of an ordinary carrier; he takes responsibility for what he carries, up to a certain value. In the Railway Department you get a receipt, and the practice is supposed to be that every person who handles that article signs for it; and it ought to be the easiest thing in the world to nail it down to someone. The department refused to allow me to nail it down to anybody. They do not accept the responsibility themselves, they will not have an inquiry made, and they will not give any information. Under those conditions I say that the Minister and his staff, and the department generally, should see that this sort of thing is done away with. Beyond that I do not want to waste any further time. I just wanted to bring those matters into prominence. I hope the Minister will take them into consideration. I am not doing it for the purpose of making capital, but because they are absolute facts and I happen to be one of the victims myself.

Colonel RANKIN: I want to make a few remarks, in reference to a matter to which I have already referred—that is the question of the carriage of coal on the railways and the consumption of coal on the railways. I previously pointed out that so far as the collieries in my district are concerned, they had not been receiving anything in the nature of a fair deal at the hands of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course you were.

*Colonel Rankin.]*

Colonel RANKIN: The Minister for Railways will have an opportunity of addressing the House when I have finished.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, I won't. I have already done so.

Colonel RANKIN: On the present occasion I am dealing with this matter, and I submit that the attitude of the Government towards those collieries has not been at all fair or honest.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Colonel RANKIN: My object is this—that it has been stated that certain collieries in my district have received orders which they could not supply; and it was held that on that account the treatment meted out by the Government to those collieries was perfectly fair and reasonable. Now, the explanation is perfectly simple, and it is a matter to which I have previously referred—that is, that the Government in withdrawing their supplies from the Burrum district are bringing them from Ipswich at a cost which, for the twelve months works out at £25,000.

At fifteen minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. BERTRAM took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Colonel RANKIN: Some eighteen months ago a dispute arose as to the price charged by the collieries, and that disagreement extended so far that the Acting Minister for Railways, Mr. Hunter, said he would decline to give the price the collieries were asking unless he had an audit made of the company's books to satisfy himself that they were justified in asking for the increased price. Notwithstanding the fact that the price charged the Railway Department was authorised by a judge appointed by the Federal Government to deal with that very matter, and, notwithstanding the fact that all the other consumers in that district were paying the same price, the Acting Minister for Railways refused to pay it. That was an extraordinary procedure; a procedure which I venture to say the Government never adopted towards suppliers in any other district.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have not acted honestly with the department.

Colonel RANKIN: Can the hon. gentleman point out a single dishonest action on the part of the people I refer to.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They told us they would serve us when the private people were served.

Colonel RANKIN: The Minister for Railways has no justification or authority for making a statement of that kind.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have a written report.

Colonel RANKIN: There is no such statement as that in it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They would not serve the railways until the mills were served.

Colonel RANKIN: I am dealing with a period before the mills were started.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They wanted to make a convenience of the Railway Department.

Colonel RANKIN: They have been supplying the Railway Department for thirty years, and no trouble has ever occurred before.

Mr. WEIR: No, because you made the Railway Department a dumping ground.

*(Colonel Rankin.)*

Colonel RANKIN: This is a matter which the hon. gentleman knows nothing whatever about. Owing to the attitude of the Administration in withdrawing their supplies from these particular collieries a number of men left the district, and the output dropped. When, subsequently a large order was given, they were not in the position to supply it. In that district, as in most other districts, there are two seasons in the year, a busy season and a slack season. The busy season is when the sugar season is on, and the sugar-mills consume a large quantity of coal. That is from June to December. From December to June is a slack time, and it was during the slack season that the Railway Department withdrew their orders from the Burrum coal mines and gave them to Ipswich. It was owing to the withdrawal of those orders and the consequent reduction in the output that those men found themselves in the position that when a sudden large demand was made upon them by the department, they were not able to fulfil it. If the collieries were getting a fair deal, why did the hon. member for Maryborough interest himself with the Minister in endeavouring to secure some trade for those people? If they were so fully supplied, what was the necessity for the member for Maryborough asking the Minister to give orders to those mines? The hon. member stands condemned out of his own mouth.

Mr. WEIR: I believe that you ought to have the orders, but you should supply them.

Colonel RANKIN: Owing to the action of the Government in withdrawing the orders from those collieries it has reduced the output to one-third of what it was three years ago. I was astounded to find that the output from one colliery dropped from 120,000 tons per year to 50,000 tons per year. The collieries are there, the possibilities are there, and the coal is there. Do you think for one single moment that if they had been treated as they had a right to be treated that the output would have dropped to that extent? Do you think that if they had received fair treatment at the hands of the Government that it would be necessary for the hon. member for Maryborough to take a message to the Minister to obtain redress for their grievances. The Minister knows, and the hon. member for Maryborough knows, that they did not receive fair treatment, else why did the hon. member for Maryborough ask that they should be given some orders.

Mr. WEIR: When the Minister explained it to me, I put it before the public.

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. member for Maryborough said that he thought the proper way to settle this important question was to leave it in the hands of the colliery proprietors, the Railway Commissioner, and the men.

Mr. WEIR: That is so.

Colonel RANKIN: That was the result of the hon. gentleman's effort, but it is not the way to deal with it. We are here to represent the interests of that district and to bring anything before this Chamber which we conceive to be unfair and unjust. I do not believe that the present Minister for Railways was responsible for what occurred, because it happened before he came into office. I do not think that the present Minister would have taken the action that was taken. Various members have tried to cloud the issue. They pointed out that certain

orders were given and not supplied, quite ignoring the fact that it was owing to the attitude of the Government that the output had fallen off to such an extent that they were not in a position to supply those large orders.

Mr. GLEDSON: How do you account for the drop from 1,100 tons in October, 1916, to 82 tons in November, 1916, and nil in December, 1916?

Colonel RANKIN: Probably the consumption of coal at the various sugar industries was comparatively small in October.

Mr. GLEDSON: Is not October a busy month in the sugar season?

Colonel RANKIN: In 1916 the crushing was small compared with other years. The mills did not start crushing until late in the year. The hon. member for Ipswich must accept this if he is desirous of doing a fair thing to that district. The fact remains that out of four mines working, one mine has closed down. The owner told me on Monday that he was going to close down because he could not carry on at the price. He told me that in a fortnight's operations he received £3 for his own labour and his interest in the business, and he had to shut down. The hon. member for Ipswich knows the position of affairs at Torbanlea, because he sat at the Arbitration Court with the owners of that property when they pointed out that they had been losing money for months past.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is so.

Colonel RANKIN: Yet we are told by the Government that these people are charging too high a price and that was why the orders were taken from Burrum to Ipswich. We have two mines which have practically gone under. Then we have the Dundee mine. The hon. member for Ipswich knows all about the position of the Dundee mine—whether they have been making any money. He knows that they have not been making money, and he knows that they sent an application to the judge of the Federal Court, asking them for an increase to enable them to carry on. Yet the hon. member sits behind a Government which accuses these people of trying to impose prices and conditions which are not justified. The hon. member for Maryborough admitted that there was a difference of 2s. 6d. per ton in the price of the coal brought from Ipswich and the price at the Burrum coalfield.

Mr. WEIR: I did not say that.

Colonel RANKIN: During my speech on the Address in Reply, I said—

“Because the railways have to be supplied—from Bundamba, a distance of 200 miles, in order to save the difference between the 2s. or 3s. per ton,

“Mr. Weir: To save the principle.

“Colonel RANKIN: It has been said by the hon. member for Maryborough that there is a difference of 3s. per ton.

“Mr. Weir: Four shillings, not 3s.”

Why was the order removed from the Burrum district to Ipswich?

Mr. WEIR: Ask the Minister.

Colonel RANKIN: We know perfectly well it was because there was a difference in the price. I pointed out to this House that instead of the price being too high it was such that there was no profit in it. It is no use burking the facts, because we know them quite well! Anyone who takes the trouble to look into this matter will see

that the Burrum has had anything but a reasonable and fair deal.

Mr. D. RYAN: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Burrum in order in discussing coal on this vote?

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course, he is.

Mr. D. RYAN: We are not discussing coal and coal dust. We are discussing the Estimates and Supply.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Colonel RANKIN: I do not wish to take up any more time, but the remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough and the hon. member for Ipswich in reply to my statement are calculated to leave a wrong impression. It was simply on account of the removal of the orders to Ipswich that the output was reduced during the off season. In consequence of this, when, during the busy season, they got rushed with orders for supplies of coal, they were not in a position to deal with them. It is only fair that that district should be given a fair deal, because it employs a large number of men and it means the dissemination of a great deal of wealth, and when normal conditions return it

[5.30 p.m.] will go far to bring back that prosperity which we are looking for and anxious to see. I hope that by putting the matter before the Minister in this way there may yet be an opportunity for him to prevent such a calamity happening as would take place in the event of those mines closing down altogether. They have done much to build up the district in the days gone by. The comparatively trivial undertaking of 8,000 tons per year in 1884 has increased to fifteen times that quantity in thirty-three years, but there is now evidence of the dry rot setting in in that industry which is apparent in so many other industries. The colliery companies have been large factors in the development of that industry in the past, just as that industry has been a large factor in producing revenue for the railway. We have all the opportunities there now. We have our network of railways, our deep-water port, and all those facilities which should go to make the Burrum district one of the most important coal-producing centres, not only in Queensland, but along our Australian sea-board.

Resolution 2 agreed to.

Resolutions 3 and 4 agreed to.

On resolution 5—“*Home Secretary's Department, Chief Office*”—

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not wish to go outside my province in any discussion on this resolution, but if I deal with a matter I wish to bring up now in connection with the police it will probably save me from speaking on resolution 17. I would like to know the condition the Police Force of Queensland is in to-day. It is a force administered by the Home Department, but I would like to know whether it has got out of the control of the department or not. Instances have happened that have tended to cause a good deal of criticism outside the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the cowardly attack on the wife of the Home Secretary at Toowoomba by the conspiratorists?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I know nothing about that. If a cowardly attack was made on Mrs. Huxham, it should not have been allowed. It was very reprehensible if the attack took place there; as much so as if it took place at Innisfail, Mareeba,

*Hon. J. Tolmie.]*

Cunnamulla, or Thargomindah. I do not want to enter into a discussion now, because an inquiry is taking place on some of these matters, but I want to point out that the public are a great deal concerned over matters of this kind, and would like to have an assurance that the police are going to do their duty to-day and in days to come just as they have done their duty in the past. We have always been very proud of the Police Force, and have looked upon it as an absolutely impartial organisation, which has always safeguarded the public interest and maintained public peace. It would be just as well for us to really understand what the position is. If the laws are there, they ought to be observed, and we ought to have some assurance from the Government that there is going to be an observance of the laws that are essential for the wellbeing of the people of the State.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I desire to say a word or two on this vote. I have no desire to refer to what are extremely warm and vexed questions in Queensland to-day, for the reason that the same can be said to be more or less sub judice, but it may be necessary to make this statement, because the public are very much concerned about the present position, and will probably not understand why the subject is not fully discussed. I know that if the boot was on the other foot, that the same view would not be taken by our friends on the other side, but that is no reason why we should not do what we deem to be right, under the circumstances. I am not going to refer further to that. I regret that I was not present when the vote for the Chief Office of the Home Department was discussed, because there is a matter which I think calls for considerable notice, that is, in regard to the manner in which the Home Secretary has administered affairs relating to local authorities. I am referring now to the somewhat arbitrary, harsh, and improper action of the Home Department in the treatment meted out to the Sherwood Shire, both in connection with the election of a member to represent one of the wards, and in reference to the interference with a certain contract which it was the function of the council to handle, and which resulted, by reason of the Home Department's interference, in a considerable loss to the ratepayers. I think that the function of appointing a man to fill a vacancy in the local authority by reason of the failure of an election is one that ought to be exercised on something like a reasonable and fixed principle. As I understand the facts in this case, a retiring councillor had, by reason of some failure on the part of his supporters, been late in his nomination. No other nomination was received, and the result was a vacancy which had to be filled up. The Home Secretary was asked to gazette an appointment in accordance with the usual practice, and the name of the retiring councillor, Mr. Arthur Baynes, was recommended to the Home Department for the purpose by a majority of the council. The Home Secretary, or the department, decided to put forward a nominee of the Workers' Political Organisation in that district, and to ignore the recommendations of the local council. I fancy that most fair-minded people would say that the man who has been a member of the local council for years, and who understands the work and is willing to continue in office, is the man who ought to have the first claim, and

[Hon. J. Tolmie.

particularly as it was endorsed by the local authority. The action taken almost signifies the practise of "spoils to the victors." It is not good, clean administration to do that, and, as a result, much dissatisfaction has taken place in the district, and it is only right that the extraordinary attitude of the Home Department should be called attention to. I say it was a contemptible thing to do, but it is not the only case of the kind, because there is a very similar incident of an equal or more disagreeable character in the North of Queensland. The matter in connection with the sanitary contract at Sherwood, which was interfered with by the Home Department, is of another but equally important character. The department went to the extent of disallowing a resolution, under which an extra sum was to be paid to the contractor there, and it was perfectly within the rights of the council, and a just thing to do, by reason of the alteration of the conditions which existed at the time. That is a unique feature of the way in which the present Government listens to the complaint of a discontented minority. One or two members of that authority are prominent members of the Workers' Political Organisation, and it appears from the correspondence that the Government are prepared to lend their ears to complaints of this sort, and to do things for political purposes that are contrary to commonsense and to ordinary democratic rules of fair play. The result has been to involve the Sherwood Council in a considerable extra expenditure. The council were perfectly in the right, and had to take a course of action to carry out their undoubted right which involved a considerable expenditure to the ratepayers, for which action the Home Department is entirely responsible. I think when the election comes round the representative of the Government in that electorate will feel the result. From a knowledge of many years of the Sherwood local authority and of the men who have gratuitously given their time to the management of affairs there, I can say there is no better governed local area in Queensland. The chairman of that local authority is a man of leisure, and devotes the whole of his time to the interests of the shire, and he does the work in a most admirable way. Under the circumstances, I think it was ill-becoming of the Home Department to take the action which they did, and it is a fair thing to bring the matter before the House for the public notoriety which will be given to it. I am sorry the Home Secretary is not here. The Opposition constitutes the members of the Assembly just now; none of the members on the Government side seem to take much interest in the affairs of the State, but seem to be more interested in fighting against the interests of the country elsewhere.

Mr. SWAYNE: Before the vote goes through, I want to draw attention to the fact that during the session I asked the Home Secretary for particulars as to how the soldiers' votes are to be recorded at the next election, but so far I have failed to obtain any information.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The matter which the hon. member refers to will be more properly discussed under resolution No. 9.

Mr. SWAYNE: If I can bring the matter up on resolution No. 9, I will defer my remarks till then.

Resolution 5 agreed to.

Resolutions 6 to 8, inclusive, agreed to.

On resolution 9—"Electoral Registration"—

Mr. CORSER said: I would like to say a few words on this resolution. I understand from the conversations I have had with those who have seen newspaper cuttings that the electoral office is to be transferred to the Justice Department. If that has been arranged, then I say it is going to be an injustice to the electoral districts of Queensland. I contend that any tampering with the Electoral Office at the present time is not for the benefit of the elector who wants to use the ballot-box as a means of conveying his opinion at the next election. I sincerely hope that the Government do not intend, after we adjourn, to have the control of this department transferred from the Home Department to the Department of Justice. I understand that it is not the only department of the State that is to be transferred to the Acting Minister for Justice, and I sincerely hope that this department will stay in its present position until after the elections, at any rate. We will have more confidence in it under the Home Secretary, where it has been so long, and we will have more confidence also in regard to providing regulations for providing the soldiers with a vote at the next election. Whilst the Premier at an early part of this session did say that something had been provided, some machinery for absent soldiers, during the latter part of the session he has practically admitted—and I think he will find if he looks up the Act—that there is no machinery at the present time, although we are practically going into recess, to give the absent soldiers a vote. With regard to nurses or doctors or military men, there is no machinery to give them a vote, and the past experience in regard to the referendum proved that only a few hundreds of soldiers voted. Certainly, some votes were said to be sunk in one of the boats that was torpedoed, but if we are going to have a vote recorded at the next election by the absent soldiers, then we should have those votes counted and properly scrutinized where they are voted, and not trust to the possibility of the ships bringing the votes being lost. The result of that was that a great number of votes at the last referendum were lost. I understand only 1,200 votes were counted at the referendum on the abolition of the Legislative Council. When we consider that Queensland has sent away something like 60,000 soldiers, surely there must be on the other side a considerable number of Queensland soldiers entitled to vote, and they should have their votes not only given to them, but also an opportunity to have their votes counted on the other side, and counted early without the risk of being lost on the way out. We do not want a period of three or four months elapsing after the elections, as was the case in connection with the referendum, before we find out how the soldiers voted. If the Government are prepared to give the soldiers a vote, make it possible for those votes to be counted on the other side before there is any risk of their being lost, and also under the department that has administered the Electoral Act and the elections up to the present time—the Home Department—and not transfer it to the Justice Department or any other department just when an election is coming on. I think you will agree with me that it is necessary also to put in an appeal to the Government that at this election every minor on the other side who has taken up arms in the defence of this country

should be given a vote, as is provided for in the regulations controlling the reinforcements referendum. I hope the Government will be guided by the fairness of the position, and see that every person who has left for the front, whether he be a nurse or a soldier or a doctor, munition worker, or anybody else, whether he be on the roll or not, who has enlisted or gone for the service of the Empire, is provided with a safe means of voting.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about giving the persons under twenty-one at present in camp a vote?

Mr. CORSER: I say every minor who has enlisted and every person who has left or intends to go to the front should be given an opportunity to vote, and every precaution should be taken that such a thing would not be abused. We should go further and provide that those votes should be counted on the other side. Unless we do that, it is impossible for us to gauge the opinion of the electors of Queensland, and if there is any section of the electors who should have a vote or two votes, it is those who have enlisted and the mothers and fathers of those who have gone. I sincerely hope the Government will do something now, although they have dallied during the whole of the session, towards bringing about the regulations which are necessary, and the machinery that is absolutely essential, for providing a vote for those soldiers. A hurried election would mean that the machinery should be provided some months before, and every facility should be given, either the Agent-General or somebody else, that the vote should be taken and scrutineers appointed from both sides.

Mr. SWAYNE: This is a question I have raised during the session by means of questions to the Home Secretary, and so far he has failed to accord any information whatever on this point. He has said that provision will be made. What I ask is in what form will those provisions be made, and I would like to point out that we are getting letters from those at the front wanting information on this point. Many of us have sons and friends there who naturally want to know what steps are being taken. At the last State election the arrangement was that they signed an authority or proxy to some friend here in Queensland to vote for them. If that is going to be done this time it would not hurt the Home Secretary to have told us so. If, on the other hand, he is going to make some other arrangement, he should have taken the House into his confidence. I understand it is to be done by regulation, and it would only be decent to have those regulations tabled before Parliament rises. As it is now, after we rise, in all probability we will not meet again until after the elections, and any regulations they think fit can be made, and no opportunity for criticism is afforded. Surely, in a matter of this sort, that is not right. Parliament should be offered some opportunity for expressing an opinion on matters of this sort—the voting of some 40,000 soldiers at the front—and we are entitled to know what is to be done. The failure to afford information on these points when asked, which is perfectly fair information that we are entitled to, gives rise outside to all sorts of suspicion. If the Government sometimes complain they are not treated fairly in these matters, that people suspect them of intentions they are guiltless of, they have only themselves to blame. All through

they have steadfastly refused to give any information on points we are fully entitled to receive information on, and, although the opportunity of parliamentary criticism will have passed, we should know as soon as possible what arrangements are going to be made. If it is to be by proxy or authority, then it is time that the soldiers were notified to that effect and given an opportunity to send those documents across to their friends in Queensland. That all takes months, and I think the department, or the Minister who controls the department, is to blame for not affording information on this very important matter.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I just desire to say a word or two in connection with this matter, which is a very important one. There is a regulation relating to voting by absent soldiers made under section 100 of the Act, but there is no machinery as to how the voting is to be carried out. The regulation reads—

“(1) Any elector who is absent from Queensland on service with His Majesty's forces during the present war, and who desires to vote at any election, shall fill up a nomination of some person to exercise the right of voting on his behalf in accordance with the Form W in the schedule.”

When an election takes place, all those men who are over at the front know nothing at all about the election taking place here. They are much more busy than we would like them to be, and they cannot attend to their election matters unless you have some machinery over at the other side to enable them to take the vote. They have to sign a form publicly, and how are they going to get that form? How are they going to get leave from their regiments to go chasing round for that form, probably some 30 or 40 miles or somewhere that they do not know. Then, they have to have this form witnessed and sent over here. It is a poor and shabby way of giving a vote to those men, and I hope a better way will be devised, so that they will be able to vote over in the trenches just the same as they are under the Commonwealth Act, and that ample time will be given to them to do so. Otherwise, they might as well be deprived altogether of the power of a vote. Their feelings may have changed politically since they went across, and the feelings of their friends here may not have changed, and the friend of a soldier who may get the form may vote just diametrically opposed to the opinion of the soldier. I trust that the Home Department will devise some way by which the vote will become of value to the soldier instead of as at the present time being of not much value to him.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*): I would just like to say a word in connection with the transfer—at any rate it is in the air—of the Electoral Office from the Home Department to the Department of Justice. It seems to me that if that is in contemplation the House might enjoy the confidence of the Government in this matter, and some indication of the why and wherefore of the move might have been given to the House. Indeed, Dame Rumour has it that other things are in contemplation. Why these wholesale transfers from one department to another of offices which have been worked from time immemorial, as far as we are concerned? They seem to have been fairly well

[*Mr. Swayne.*

managed in that department, and I should imagine that the Home Secretary is certainly careful in the management of his department, and is quite competent to continue the administration of those offices to the satisfaction of the public generally. It seems to me that it is quite foreign to the good interests of the State that a change like this should take place on the eve of an election. One would readily feel that it is quite open to a very big degree of suspicion to transfer a sub-department at a juncture like this from one department to another. Surely, some information will be vouchsafed to the House before it rises in this connection in order to allay a good deal of feeling that exists. I trust we will have some information on this matter.

At 7 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Resolution 9 agreed to.

Resolutions 10 to 30, both inclusive, agreed to.

On resolution 31—“*Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly*”—

HON. J. TOLMIE: The vote deals with salaries and contingencies in connection with the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, and therein is concerned the question of “Hansard.” I wish to point out that during the present session we had had a lot of extraneous matter introduced into “Hansard,” which should never have got there, and it is a very undesirable thing and was the cause of very serious trouble.

Mr. GLEDSON: You took a whole day to get in that Wando Vale evidence.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Well, we got it in because other people got other things in. I say, at the same time, that this extraneous matter should not get into “Hansard.” In the public Press to-day a statement has been made that the whole of the police court proceedings that have taken place in the city of Brisbane were to go into “Hansard.” If that sort of thing is going to continue, a farce will be made of “Hansard.”

The SPEAKER: Did the hon. gentleman say that the whole of the police court proceedings are going to be printed in “Hansard”?

HON. J. TOLMIE: So it is reported in the public Press by an hon. gentleman who, I have no doubt, knows what he is talking about. Whether he was correctly reported or not I don't know.

The SPEAKER: I can give you the assurance that it will not be printed in “Hansard” unless by order of the House.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I was going to say I thought that you would exercise a wise discretion in regard to matters of this sort. Having that assurance, I am perfectly satisfied.

The SPEAKER: Of course, if it is inserted by resolution of the House, the Speaker has no option.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I know that you have no option in that case; but that if it rests entirely with yourself, you will preserve “Hansard” as a record of the House, and not as a police court record. Having had that assurance, I will not discuss the matter any further.

Resolution 31 agreed to.



On resolution 32—“Premier and Chief Secretary's Department, Chief Office”—

Mr. SWAYNE: I called out the number of this resolution because there is a matter here that I think requires explanation. It all arose from the habit—whatever you like to call it—of the Government in refusing to answer questions which are perfectly fair and are asked in the public interest. On the 4th September I asked the Chief Secretary—

“What moneys have been spent since 30th June, 1916, to date, on literary matter for the purpose of advertising the resources of the State or its attractiveness to tourists?”

“What are the names of the persons engaged in the production of such matter, and to whom payments have been made in respect of the above?”

“Are there any persons so engaged at present; if so, who are they, what are the details of the work which they are performing, and what remuneration are they receiving or due to receive?”

The answer was that I had better move for a return. Then, again, I also asked the following question:—

“Is Mr. Randolph Bedford engaged, or has he been engaged, directly or indirectly, by the Government?”

“If so, in what capacity and at what remuneration? Will the Minister table any correspondence or agreements referring to the matter?”

“Does he enjoy or has he enjoyed the privilege of a railway pass?”

I was asked to move for a return, which I accordingly did the following day, and the motion was carried by the House. I take it the matter then became the property of the House, and it is due to the House that the return should be made. Days and weeks went by and the return was not forthcoming. I then got up and courteously asked the Chief Secretary if he could inform me when this return would be available. The only answer I got was, “It will be ready when it is ready.” In fact, the discourtesy of the reply was so marked that the Press even took it up. Up to date that is all that has happened. Now, I take it that in refusing to give this return when instructed by Parliament, he is defying Parliament itself. It was clearly the Chief Secretary's duty, not to me, but to the House, to table that return.

The TREASURER: If there was any desire to refuse the return we would not have carried the resolution. You have not shown a refusal to give information.

Mr. SWAYNE: Here we are at the last day of the session. We are expecting to rise to-night. Does the Treasurer believe for one moment that we are going to get that return in the next two or three hours. The thing is absurd. This is my last opportunity of calling attention of Parliament to this ignoring of their express instructions. I think it is my duty to take advantage of it and draw the attention of the House to the manner in which the instructions have been flouted. Although the first question certainly does lend itself to being a matter for return, the second question was one which could fairly be answered by “yes” or “no.” Other questions since have been asked by supporters of the hon. gentleman—more involved, bigger questions requiring bigger replies—and they have been answered. It is

a natural question, in view of the evident reluctance of the hon. gentleman to give this information, for this side and for the public to ask is there anything behind it; is there any reason for this reluctance to supply information to which we are entitled? Nobody can say that the questions were wrong in any way. They were perfectly fair questions. I may say that I have been told that the gentleman in question, although not a member of either House at the time, was in possession of a pass.

The TREASURER: You ought to wait until you get information.

Mr. SWAYNE: Wait until we get the information, when the information was asked for on the 4th September last! In all probability, when the question is asked next it will not be addressed to the present Chief Secretary. The way in which legitimate questions have been answered and the way they have been ignored has become a farce throughout the whole of the session. I say I have been informed that the gentleman in question did have a pass. He was not a member of Parliament at the time nor, so far as could be discovered, was entitled to a pass, and he also was receiving remuneration out of one of those unitemised votes we have passed—votes in connection with this and other departments which are in a lump sum without any specification as to how they would be applied. The report was that this gentleman, pending his appointment—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! We are not entitled to discuss a member of another Chamber in connection with this vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: It has a great bearing on the matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is in order in discussing a refusal to supply information, but he is not in order in discussing some other matter.

Mr. SWAYNE: Whether it was true or not I cannot say. I think I was doing a service to the hon. gentleman in asking for this information so as to put these rumours of corruption at rest and clear the Government from any suspicion of the kind. I have often pointed out that the Government have themselves to thank for a lot of the suspicion which centres round them. The manner in which they have obstinately refused to give information upon such points as this lends itself to the opinion that something wrong is being done. At any rate, so far as this matter is concerned, it is not one between me and the Chief Secretary so much as it is one between Parliament and the Chief Secretary, inasmuch as he has ignored and flouted the express instructions of Parliament, given by resolution of this House.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is quite true, as stated by the hon. member for Mirani, that a large number of returns ordered to be furnished to this House during the past two or three sessions of Parliament have not been provided.

The TREASURER: Not a large number.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yes. I will mention them if necessary. Most of these happen to be in the office of the Chief Secretary.

The TREASURER: One return in connection with my department it has been found impossible to get out.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There was read out this afternoon a list of the returns that we

*Mr. Macartney.]*

had not received. There was a return asked for on the motion of Mr. McPhail in reference to enlistments in the Government departments; there was one by the hon. member for Mirani in regard to advertising in Queensland; and we did not receive a return ordered on the motion of Mr. Morgan in reference to the accidents to Government motor-cars; also a return moved for by Mr. Jones. As a matter of fact, in the preceding session a number of returns asked for from the Chief Secretary's Department have not yet been furnished. It only indicates—as the hon. gentleman who has just sat down says—that the Government are not inclined to give this House information on certain questions, and when those questions are discussed without adequate information it is not fair to the House. When the House passes a motion when a question is evaded and the suggestion is made that a return should be asked for, it is a fair thing that in a reasonable time the return should come to the House. I think the House has been treated particularly badly by the Government, and if the Government are sometimes wont to complain in connection with certain matters they must take the full onus of it themselves.

Resolution 32 agreed to.

On resolution 33—“*Agent-General for the State*”—

HON. J. TOLMIE: Once more I rise for the purpose of obtaining some information from the hon. gentleman in charge of the Treasury bench. I would like to get some information about the appointment of Agent-General. The proposal to appoint a new Agent-General has been going on for the last twelve months. If a certain hon. gentleman had not been in the House to-day I would have asked if the Government had made the appointment, and if the hon. gentleman had gone. I would like to know whether the Treasurer can give us any information with regard to the Agent-General.

The TREASURER: I am unable to furnish any more information than the Premier gave to the House a little while ago.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Then I understand that no further progress has been made towards the appointment of the Agent-General.

The TREASURER: No.

HON. J. TOLMIE: If there are no further developments we must content ourselves with that answer.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): It is not only the members of the House who would like to get some information about this matter, but the people of the country are anxious to know who is to succeed Sir Thomas Robinson. We know that Sir Thomas Robinson has been one of the best Agents-General we have had for many years. It was generally thought throughout the country that an appointment was made by the present Government, and a certain name was mentioned. I would like the Treasurer to let the country know the name of the gentleman who has been selected, because the people in the country are very desirous of knowing.

The TREASURER: I cannot give you any more information.

Mr. GRAYSON: Has any appointment been made?

The TREASURER: It has not been considered yet.

[*Mr. Macartney.*

Mr. GRAYSON: The leader of the Opposition asked if an appointment had been made, and in all fairness the Treasurer should give the information.

The TREASURER: I cannot give you any more information, because we have not considered it yet.

\* Mr. MACARTNEY: It was quite well known that the hon. member for Maranoa was expected to go to the old country to take up the position of Agent-General, and matters went so far that a successor for the Maranoa electorate was selected.

The TREASURER: That is assuming something that has not been decided.

Mr. MACARTNEY: This side of the House can only form opinions on information which we can get, and one of the items of information was that an election was expected in the Maranoa district, and the successor to the hon. member for Maranoa was selected.

The TREASURER: The fact that an election did not take place shows that your information was wrong.

Mr. MACARTNEY: My information came from a reliable authority.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I was also told by a Cabinet Minister.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I got information from a reliable source that the hon. member for Maranoa was elected by the caucus, and later that it was possible it would change its mind. Sir Thomas Robinson has done good work for Queensland, and he has also done good work for the Imperial Government. It is a matter of interest to know whether Sir Thomas Robinson is going to cease to act as Agent-General, and whether his place is to be taken by the hon. member for Maranoa. That is not an unreasonable thing to ask, and the country are entitled to know.

The TREASURER: The Government have not come to a final decision yet on the matter.

Resolution 33 agreed to.

Resolutions 34 to 46, inclusive, agreed to.

On resolution 47—“*Department of Justice, Chief Office*”—

Mr. MACARTNEY: I notice in the afternoon papers a reference to a discussion that has taken place between the Chief Justice and the Premier in regard to a letter which the Chief Justice forwarded to the Department of Justice. I understand that that letter was forwarded together with a return, giving information which was asked for in this House some time ago, and which was furnished by the Assistant Minister for Justice, the information furnished by the hon. gentleman not being in accordance with fact. Investigations had been made by the proper official of the court, and this was the subject-matter of the letter forwarded by the Chief Justice to the Assistant Minister for Justice or Attorney-General. A promise was given by the Premier to the Chief Justice that he would give the contents of the report furnished by the Chief Justice the same publicity as was given to the information supplied by the Assistant Minister for Justice. The hon. member for Queenton gave notice yesterday of a question, asking that a copy of that letter be laid on the table. The question was asked to-day, and in accordance with that question a copy of the letter was this afternoon laid on the table. The laying of that letter on the table of the House by no means gives the same

publicity which was given to the earlier information. The earlier information was circulated, and I propose to read now the contents of the letter forwarded by the Chief Justice and the return which accompanied it; so that, at any rate, it may appear in "Hansard." If the Premier had read it it would have appeared in the "Minutes" of the House. The letter is as follows:—

"Judges' Chambers,  
Brisbane, 29th November, 1917.

"Sir,—I have the honour to call your attention to the answers given in the Legislative Assembly on the 20th instant by your colleague the Assistant Minister for Justice, to the following questions put by Mr. Foley, M.L.A.:—

"Mr. Foley, pursuant to notice, asked the Assistant Minister for Justice—

1. How many Supreme Court decisions have been appealed against since the establishment of the High Court in Australia?

2. Also give the names of the judges and the number of judgments appealed against with (a) the number affirmed; and (b) the number reversed?

"Answers—

1. Seventy-nine appeals from decisions of the Supreme Court.

2.

Name of Judge.	Number of Judgments Affirmed by High Court.	Number of Judgments Reversed by High Court.
The Hon. Sir Pope A. Cooper, Chief Justice ...	21	43
The Hon. Mr. Justice Real, Senior Puisne Judge ...	17	31
The Hon. Mr. Justice Chubb, Puisne Judge ...	20	29
The Hon. Mr. Justice Shand, Puisne Judge and Northern Judge (appointed 3rd November, 1908) ...	14	8
The Hon. Mr. Justice Lukin, Puisne Judge and Central Judge (appointed 12th July, 1910) ...	12	13

In the case of Purcell v. Bacon, the High Court judgment was overruled by the Privy Council, which affirmed the judgments of Cooper, C.J., Shand and Lukin, J.J. In the above figures the judgments of these judges have been regarded as having been upheld by the High Court.

"I append a certificate of the Registrar of the court compiled by my direction, of the correct answers to the aforesaid questions, assuming that you wish it to be understood that your colleague regarded these questions and answers as a matter of public importance.

"I draw your attention to the remarkable discrepancies between your colleague's answers and the facts.

"I desire that you will be good enough to give as much publicity to these official figures as was given by your colleague

in his reply to Mr. Foley's questions, and I invite you to offer such explanation as you may think fit to make of these irreconcilable statements.

"Awaiting your reply, I have the honour to be, sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"(Sgd.) POPE A. COOPER."

Then Mr. Norris gives a certificate in the following form:—

"I, Charles Sydney Norris, Registrar of the Supreme Court of Queensland and District Registrar of the High Court of Australia at Brisbane having the custody of the Queensland records of the said courts, hereby certify that the attached list contains the number of Supreme Court decisions appealed against since the establishment of the High Court of Australia (including those in which leave to appeal has been asked) and the names of the judges and number of judgments appealed against with—

The number affirmed.

The number reversed.

The number varied.

The number in which notices of appeal given, but not proceeded with.

The number in which leave refused, or granted and rescinded, or granted and not proceeded with.

"Dated at Brisbane this twenty-ninth day of November, 1917.

"[L.S.] CHAS. S. NORRIS,

"Registrar Supreme Court of Queensland and District Registrar High Court of Australia, Brisbane."

"Number of Supreme Court decisions appealed against since the establishment of the High Court of Australia (including those in which leave to appeal has been asked)—109.

	Leave to appeal refused or granted and rescinded, or granted and not proceeded with	Notice of appeal given and not proceeded with	Varied.	Reversed.	Affirmed.
Sir Pope A. Cooper, Chief Justice	19	10	1	29	22
His Honour Mr. Justice Real	16	11	2	25	13
His Honour Mr. Justice Chubb	17	11	4	21	17
His Honour Mr. Justice Shand	10	6	2	7	11
His Honour Mr. Justice Lukin	8	8	..	10	12

"In the case, Attorney-General and Mr. Macartney.]

Isles v. Council of the City of Brisbane, the Chief Justice was overruled by the High Court, but his judgment was in part affirmed and in part varied on appeal to the Privy Council.

"In these figures his judgment is regarded as having been varied by the High Court.

"In Bacon v. Purcell the Privy Council affirmed the judgments of the Chief Justice, Shand, and Lukin, JJ.

"In above figures their judgments have been regarded as having been upheld by the High Court.

"[L.S.] CHAS. S. NORRIS,

"Registrar, Supreme Court, and District Registrar, High Court of Australia, Brisbane."

I think it is only fair that those figures should receive the publicity that His Honour the Chief Justice has asked for. I cannot understand just why a return should be handed to this House which has proved so incorrect.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: It has not been proved that so far just because you say it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The responsible officer of the Supreme Court—the Registrar of the Supreme Court and District Registrar of the High Court—is the man in the best position to give the information.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: The officials of the Justice Department say that their return is a correct return.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It will be for the officials of the Justice Department to show that the return is correct, as the figures have now been supplied by the responsible officer of the Supreme Court. It is really difficult to understand why a return of that nature should have been supplied to the House.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: The officials of the department are conferring over the matter now.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The information was given in answer to a question put by an hon. member opposite who takes no interest in such questions. What the question was prompted for I cannot say.

[7.30 p.m.] There seems to be a disposition to cast reflections upon our courts of justice nowadays by members on the other side of the House. I think it a matter for regret. Whatever the object was of putting a member up to ask a question and giving information which is not strictly correct, I do not think it is any credit to the Government.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: How do you know those statements are not correct?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Because I am satisfied to take the certificate of the Registrar of the Supreme Court and of the District Registrar of the High Court as correct official information.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: There is no information that they have which is not available to the Government departments.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That may be; it may show the incompetency of the department. This is a certified statement over the signature and seal of office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court, and must be taken as correct. There can be no question of

[Mr. Macartney.

that. At any rate, whatever the object may be in casting reflections of this sort upon the judiciary—

The TREASURER: Do you mean to say that calling attention to the decisions of the court is passing a reflection on the court?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Asking questions which are calculated to cast reflections on the court, and giving answers which are incorrect.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: You are making the comments now.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is not a matter of the comments made now, but the comments which will be made by the hon. member and his friends when they come before the people on matters of importance to Queensland. It may be useful matter for a little pamphlet over the signatures of the Treasurer, the Assistant Minister for Justice, and Mr. Cuthbert Butler, as the literary committee of the Labour party's propaganda. However, it is a good thing that the true facts should be made known to the public of Queensland.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I did not rise to speak because I anticipated that the Minister for Justice would give us some information on this point.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: That is a matter for the Attorney-General.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I understand that the hon. member is the Assistant Minister for Justice and Attorney-General all in one, and it is very difficult for us to discover at times as to which rôle he is adopting. I think it is a matter of very grave concern when a return submitted to the House at the request of an hon. member is found to be wrong in almost every particular.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: It may not be wrong.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: We take it that a return signed by the Registrar of the court would be accepted as evidence in any court of Australia, whereas the statement that is submitted to this House would not be accepted. I do not understand why the question has been asked. It seems a most remarkable question to be asked by the hon. member for Mundingburra, who has never taken any very great interest in questions of this kind.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why this attack on the hon. member for Mundingburra?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: There is no attack upon the hon. member for Mundingburra.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a serious reflection upon him.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member for Mundingburra only comes into the matter as the member who asked the question, and it is a most unusual question to come from that hon. member, because after he gained the information he made no use of it in the House or anywhere else that I am aware of.

The TREASURER: He was most interested in it.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: You will notice that the Chief Justice said that these returns were compiled under his direction.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What does the hon. member mean by "his direction"?

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: That is what I would like to know.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The return for which we asked was prepared under the direction of the Assistant Minister for Justice.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: By direction of this House.

HON. J. TOLMIE: By direction of the Assistant Minister for Justice, who has charge of the department.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: I did not direct which particulars should be given.

HON. J. TOLMIE: In this case, when the hon. member says the returns were prepared under his directions he has applied to the proper officer of the court to obtain all information.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: All of the officers are under the Under Secretary.

HON. J. TOLMIE: What we want to know is why a return that, on its appearance, proves to be incorrect should have been introduced in this House if it was not for the purpose of endeavouring to cast a reflection upon the judges. Was it for the purpose of saying at a later date that the Queensland judges had their decisions reviewed and upset on so many occasions, and then to draw the deductions therefrom of incapacity on the part of the judges.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Your side abused Mr. Justice McCawley.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Attorney-General is here now, and I will resume my seat to give him an opportunity of speaking in relation to this matter.

The PREMIER: I have just come into the Chamber, and I noticed that the leader of the Opposition was speaking with regard to inaccuracies of certain returns which were made. If there is any inaccuracy, it will certainly be put right. A proper investigation will be made, and if it is found that there is any incorrectness in the returns that have been tabled we shall only be too glad to have the corrections made. (Hear, hear!) It is quite possible for officers of the department to investigate the particular cases that are referred to in both returns.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The only thing is that the correction will not appear in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: I have no doubt it will be put into "Hansard" in due course.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The lie has got a start.

The PREMIER: If there is anything wrong, it may be in the compilation by some of the subordinate officers of the department in connection with the return.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Just a word of explanation. Hon. members will understand that it would be very foolish of any of the officers of the Justice Department to put into my hands a garbled return to table in Parliament. The position to-day is that the Chief Justice wrote a letter to the Attorney-General asserting that the department are not correct in their returns, and they are now endeavouring to find out where the mistake arose. It would be stupidity of the grossest kind on the part of any officer to deliberately fabricate a return given to this House. I would be the first to resent it; but I do not think we should pass any hostile judgment, and in the meantime an investigation will be made.

Resolution 47 agreed to.

Resolutions 48 to 67 agreed to.

On resolution 68—"Printing Office"—

HON. J. TOLMIE: Much that I desire to say on this resolution was dealt with when I was speaking on the "Hansard" vote. I want to know whether "Hansard" No. 37 was going to be circulated, and under what conditions it was to be circulated. I have also heard various stories with regard to the dissension in the office, and I am told that the condition is somewhat chaotic.

The PREMIER: In consequence of what?

HON. J. TOLMIE: In consequence of censorship and difference of opinion between the Prime Minister of Australia and the staff of the office. I would like to know whether any changes are contemplated in the office.

The TREASURER: As far as I have heard, no change is contemplated in the Government Printing Office. The Government Printer is a very capable officer, and has organised the establishment on a thoroughly sound and practical basis. I, for one, would not think of making any change.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I would like to ask the hon. gentleman if there is any truth in the statement which is going round that, notwithstanding the censorship with regard to "Hansard" No. 37, a copy of that "Hansard," in a pink cover, not bearing "No. 37," has been produced in large quantities at the Government Printing Office and circulated in different ways throughout Queensland.

The TREASURER: Any of those which have been circulated were sent out of the Printing Office long before the raid.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have seen a copy of a pink pamphlet, not bearing the number 37, which was put into the backyards and gardens of a large number of the people of Brisbane since the date of the seizure, and the hon. gentleman should explain when that was printed and sent out.

The PREMIER: All before the raid.

Mr. BARNES: Distributed after the raid.

Resolution 68 agreed to.

Resolutions 69 to 72 agreed to.

On resolution 73—"Chief Office, Department of Public Instruction"—

Mr. SWAYNE: When the vote for the Education Department was before the Committee, I raised a question with regard to a teacher in the North who had been accused of making disloyal statements, and I was told at the time that I was quite wrong, and that the case had come before the court, which I knew, and he had been exonerated by the magistrate, and the case had been dismissed. Of course, I knew it had been dismissed, but I have expressed the opinion that it was a case of "Not proven," and there had been no clearance in that respect, but simply the magistrate had held that the statements were made where they were not likely to prejudice recruiting, and the case failed on those grounds. I should be very sorry to make a false accusation against anyone, and would willingly withdraw if I did. We have a system of compulsory education, under which parents are forced to send their children to school, and it seems to me to be most unfair to loyalist parents that they should be compelled to send their children to a man inculcating such doctrines as that, and, further, it was most unseemly that we should have men of that description in the employment

Mr. Swayne.†

of our public departments at the present time—men who openly paraded such opinions. Since then I have gone into the matter, and I have here the Press report of the case before the court, and I find that it quite confirms what I said, that the dismissal was wholly and solely on the grounds that the statements were not made in a place to discourage recruiting. I think there should be an inquiry held from a departmental point of view to find whether the statements were made, and if it be shown that such statements were made the teacher is unfit to remain in the employment of the department. All I want is that the matter should be cleared up. If he is innocent, nobody would be better pleased than I to see him cleared, but by the Press report it had not been disproved, and I do think, for the sake of our department and for the sake of our children, the matter should be thoroughly thrashed out, and if it were shown that those statements were made, then most certainly this teacher was unfit to remain in the employment of the department. The case was tried in Townsville, and I have here the "Townsville Bulletin." I will just read the evidence of one witness.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect what he is going to read with the question before the Committee. He cannot be allowed to read long extracts from the newspapers on the matter. He can quote the substance of the matter without reading it.

Mr. SWAYNE: For my own sake, I ought to give the grounds for bringing the matter up. It is not fair to me that I should not be allowed to give the reasons. I have been already charged with making inaccurate statements, and I have to give my grounds for bringing the matter up. I find here—

The SPEAKER: I hope the hon. gentleman will only read that portion of the report that has reference to the Education vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: I intend to be as brief as possible, and I simply wish to read extracts from the evidence of one witness, and also the utterances of the police magistrate on the matter. I find here that a teacher, Mr. George Caldersmith, in his sworn evidence before the court, stated—

"At a duly convened meeting of the State School Teachers' Association this morning, at which at least one intending recruit, and several 'eligibles' were present, the following statements were made by Mr. Walter Lawrence Silver Collings, headmaster of the Mundingburra State School:—

(1) That he should oppose with all his might any motion declaring the loyalty of State school teachers.

(2) That the British armies were simply wholesale murderers.

(3) That the British soldiers in the Boer war were guilty of much worse atrocities than the German soldiers in Belgium with regard to women and children.

(4) That in teaching English history he carefully pointed out that the English had always acted similarly.

(5) That he fully approved, and was prepared to justify, the German action in drowning without warning the 1,000 persons, mainly women and children, on board the 'Lusitania.'

[Mr. Swayne.

"This statement was in reply to my question. 'Then do you approve of the "Lusitania" atrocity?'"

"I was so shocked by his reply that, to avoid possible mistakes, I repeated the question twice more, and twice more received the same answer from Mr. Collings."

In almost every particular this was corroborated and sworn to by two others. I do not intend to read their evidence, because it was the same. Then we find that the police magistrate said: "Granting everything was said as charged, he did not see there was evidence in support of the charge." The police magistrate further on said that, granting that the statements were made, they were not made in such a place that they would influence recruiting. That was the reason why the case was dismissed, not because the man was cleared from making those statements.

Mr. BARNES: And he is still in the department.

Mr. SWAYNE: He is still in the department, and all that I ask is this. I am not prejudging the man; he may be innocent so far as I know, but if he is a man who makes statements of that kind, and boasts that, in teaching children, he teaches those doctrines, he is not fit to be in the department, and every loyal man and woman would join in my request that an inquiry should be held to see whether he is guilty or not.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I cannot allow this matter to go through without saying a word or two. When the Estimates were on, this matter was thrashed out by the hon. member for Mirani and the hon. member for Murilla, and the hon. member for Mirani has distinctly repeated to-night what he said on a previous occasion. I do not know this man Collings, but I have just been told by the Minister for Education that this case has been heard before a police magistrate who, I understand, has dismissed the case somewhat with contempt.

Mr. SWAYNE: On a technical point.

Mr. PAYNE: I say that the logic of the whole thing is that if this man is guilty the police magistrate must be a German, or have German sympathies, and I do not think it is a fair thing to the police magistrate for the hon. members for Mirani and Murilla to thrash this matter out time after time in the way they have done. I am satisfied in my own mind, from what I have read and heard of the matter, that there was nothing at all in the newspaper report that the hon. member for Mirani has just read. The police magistrate dismissed the case. Perhaps the hon. member for Mirani thinks that by rising in his place and reading a newspaper report that makes it correct.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is sworn evidence.

Mr. PAYNE: I want to know where was the police magistrate in the matter. Do you think any man who goes into the witness-box, if he is inclined to tell a lie, the fact of his being on oath and kissing the Bible would prevent him from telling a lie. I would just as soon, if I knew a man was honest, take his word as if he kissed the Bible and took his oath. Just fancy the hon. member for Mirani trying to make this House, and through this House, the country, believe that because a man takes his oath

what he says is true. I have known some of the greatest falsehoods ever uttered told by a man who took his oath, and a dishonest man would tell a lie under any conditions.

Mr. SWAYNE: There were three of them said the same.

Mr. PAYNE: It does not matter if there were twenty-three. It is evident to me that the police magistrate who tried the case did not believe those men, and I think under the circumstances it is a vile thing for these statements to be reiterated, and a man in the public service charged with such charges. Did the hon. member for Mirani want the matter brought before a higher court? The police magistrate has dismissed the case, and I would just as soon take the police magistrate's word as the word of the hon. member for Mirani or the hon. member for Murilla.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Mirani brought this matter up last session by means of a question. At that time proceedings were being instituted by the Commonwealth, and I informed him that those proceedings were being taken and that I was awaiting the evidence in the Commonwealth prosecution, and I did not think it necessary for the Public Instruction Department to make a separate inquiry, when an inquiry was already being made by virtue of a prosecution in the Police Court. I thought the evidence in one would do for the other. I gave that information towards the end of the session. Before the Commonwealth prosecution ended I gave instructions that immediately it did end the result of the prosecution was to be sent to me, and also the depositions in the case. The session closed before the evidence could be got to me, but I informed the hon. member for Mirani afterwards, on personal inquiry to myself, of the result of the Commonwealth prosecution. He knows what the result of that inquiry was by personal communication from myself to him, and therefore I contend it is a mean thing to bring it up again when he knew what the result of the inquiry was. I went closely into the evidence myself. It is quite true that the Commonwealth charge was for making statements which were detrimental to recruiting. That was the charge, and it was not dismissed on a technicality. The teacher was certainly discharged on the charge made against him, but the dismissal was in a tone of utter contempt by the police magistrate at the puerility of the charge made. He not only dismissed it

[8 p.m.] in a contemptuous fashion, but he also commented very adversely on the repeating of the conversation by the person who made the charge. There was a rivalry between the accuser and Mr. Collings. The two teachers had a great penchant for music, and there had grown up between them a little personal rivalry.

Mr. SWAYNE: There were three of them, you know.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They were rivals in popularity in different schools. I might state in fairness to Mr. Collings that he is looked upon in the department as one of the best teachers in the department. His school has a splendid record, the attendance has grown, and he is looked upon with a great deal of favour by the parents in the district. It is an

ideal school in the way in which it is conducted and the general loftiness of moral tone in which the teaching is carried on. I want to say also, so far as the accuser is concerned, that he has a very good reputation in Townsville, and we look upon him as a very excellent teacher—one of the best in the State. He has a very long and reputable record in the department.

Mr. FORSYTH: Are there any complaints made by any of the parents?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No.

Mr. FORSYTH: None.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No. Now, Mr. Collings, as a matter of fact, has been taking a great deal of interest in and giving a good deal of assistance to patriotic funds in Townsville, so that any accusations of disloyalty simply could not be substantiated. In fact, he is most popular all over Townsville. It is alleged that he uttered these words in a room where a meeting of teachers was called. There was not a quorum. When the police magistrate inquired into the matter the evidence completely broke down. The only substantial witness was an assistant teacher in the school of the accuser, and when his evidence was sifted it completely broke down.

Mr. SWAYNE: What about the three other witnesses?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am telling you that one witness was the assistant teacher in the school of the accuser, and he did not substantiate his evidence; there was a difference in the evidence and he practically gave way. I have not the papers with me, else I could prove that the assistant's evidence did not tally with that of the head teacher, who was the accuser.

Colonel RANKIN: An absence of harmony somewhere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes; they did not corroborate each other. The assistant's evidence broke down when it came to be sifted. In support of my statement that he broke down, I might state that before the police magistrate had gone into the evidence very far he was evidently so impressed with the weakness of the case that he dismissed it without a very lengthy inquiry; almost immediately after he got the evidence and inquired into it he dismissed it. Having gone through the evidence carefully as Minister for Education, and realising the weakness of the case, I had no other option but to minute the papers that as a result of that inquiry I did not think it was necessary to go any further with the case. The hon. member knew that. He could have seen the papers at any time. I will give him the papers to-morrow if he likes. It is not fair, when he knows that, to bring it up again and again in this House, with the result that it must have the effect of continuing the odium endeavoured to be cast upon Mr. Collings at that time without substantiation. I am quite prepared to let anyone look at the papers.

Resolution 73 agreed to.

Resolutions 74 to 85 agreed to.

*Hon. H. F. Hardacre.]*

On resolution 86—"Chief Office, Department of Agriculture and Stock"—

Mr. MOORE: I only want a few minutes on this. I want to mention the question of inspectors. We know at the present time that the Minister is making every effort to keep the ticks out from clean country. In the efforts which he is making, several policemen are doing stock inspectors' work. In my own district I know of one policeman in particular who is working night and day for the Stock Department. There is no doubt that in the district in which I live we owe our immunity from ticks to the efforts of this policeman. I think it is only a fair thing, when a policeman is doing work for the Agricultural Department in the way in which this man is doing it, that he should be paid some compensation for the work he is doing. I don't think it is a fair thing that he should have to do ordinary police work and also be stock inspector. I know two cases in particular where the policemen are tremendously keen on the work, and they do it practically for nothing. Those two men are in my district. They work on Sundays and go out day and night in order to protect the district; they see that the cattle are dipped, and they have made all sorts of arrangements which have been the means of keeping that country clear. The Stock Department have not sufficient inspectors to send one out and keep him in the district, which is on the border of the tick area. It would mean a large expense to the Stock Department if they had to put on extra inspectors of their own. When the Police Department allow their officers and the officers are keen and interested in that work and see that it is done properly—I think the Minister will recognise that there are cases within his knowledge in which the work could not have been done better if he had an officer of his own department out there—it would be a gracious act on the part of the Minister if he were to make some provision to give them some slight compensation for the work they do. It is hardly a fair thing for a man to do two men's work for one man's pay.

Mr. BARNES: Under this resolution, I would like to seize the opportunity of impressing on the Minister for Agriculture the opportunity that presents itself to his department this year of making a very full investigation on the subject of wheatgrowing. The season we are passing through is a normal one. We have had a superabundance of rain, and I understand that at the present time the prospects of a very good crop continue.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I hear otherwise.

Mr. BARNES: There are all kinds of reports, no doubt. In any case, my information is to the effect that the prospects are fairly good. The point I wish to make is simply this: last year rust decimated our crop and the chances are that this year, if it is a failure, the rust will again prove the greatest enemy; but if it is a success there is room for a very wide investigation by the department as to the varieties of wheat that have come to maturity.

Mr. MAY: Rust-resisting?

Mr. BARNES: Rust-resisting wheats. I therefore suggest to the department that the season offers a very big chance for making a very wide investigation as to the time and date at which the wheats were sown, the

[Mr. Moore.

varieties which have survived best, the results which have followed, and all kinds of general information such as may be useful in guiding the farmer in future days as to the variety of wheat that he may sow. Queensland, just now, is particularly interested in this matter. Regarding certain hard wheats which may be sown early, it will be of interest to know whether they have survived. Having mentioned the matter, I feel sure that the Minister for Agriculture will have his inspectors on the track of making a very full investigation. The opportunity does not come every year, and it will be invaluable as a guide to our farmers in the future as to what varieties of wheat they shall sow and what varieties they should not. It is not by any means a small matter; it is a big matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The subject will receive full attention.

Mr. BARNES: I am very glad to know that the Minister intends to give it full attention.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I desire to say a few words in connection with parks and reserves. I think, in largely populated cities, parks and reserves should be provided for. As far as Brisbane is concerned, this matter has been sadly neglected in times gone by, and at the present time the suburbs of Brisbane, if they wish to provide themselves with breathing spaces, have to buy the land from private individuals. I think this is a reflection on the people who have had control of the Lands Department in times gone by. I also want to say as far as the spending of money is concerned in connection with these gardens, parks, and reserves, that there should be something like equity as far as the various towns are concerned. There is nearly £4,000 spent on the Botanic Gardens here. It is a very fine and admirable place for people to go to, and we are told is a national work done in the interest of the State; but, at the same time, there are people in Queensland who have never seen them, and in all probability never will; or if they do they will just get a glimpse of them. In addition to that, there are quite a number of reserves and gardens in the metropolitan area which have been paid for from general revenue by the whole of the ratepayers of Queensland. The people who get the benefit of those should pay for them. I notice that Mount Coot-tha and Mount Gravatt have had about £600 per annum spent on them for some years past; and I also notice that the people who go to visit them are so much interested in them that they dig up the trees which the department have planted there and carry them away with them. I saw, quite recently, where young trees that had been planted at Mount Coot-tha had been dug up by people who visited there and carried away. I think that vandalism of that kind should be stopped. I notice that special grants of £100 have been made to Townsville, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not to Toowoomba.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They have very fine Botanic Gardens in Rockhampton, and they are well worth seeing. They have the finest collection of crotons in the Commonwealth in the Rockhampton gardens. I think that other places might receive some consideration besides Rockhampton and Townsville.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You have got nice gardens at Charters Towers.



Mr. WINSTANLEY: Yes, anyone will admit that, for a place like Charters Towers, the park and the gardens there are very creditable. I am one of those who believe that when people spend money themselves they ought to be helped by the Government, but if people are indifferent and careless about their reserves and parks, then they do not deserve any help from the Government. I am disappointed that something was not given to Charters Towers, because there is no town in the State where the people make greater efforts to beautify the town than the people of Charters Towers. They bestow a good deal of labour on the parks there, and the people appreciate it. The Horticultural Society of Charters Towers have also been doing good work for some time past, although they do not get a subsidy or any assistance from the Government. Competitions are also held in the schools, and monthly lectures given on gardens, and many people have beautified their homes and laid out nice gardens. It seems strange that the Horticultural Society does not get any assistance from the Government. I remember when grants were given to Toowoomba and Charters Towers the money was well spent, and it was highly appreciated by the people. While Charters Towers is on the decline, so far as gold-mining is concerned, there is a strenuous effort being made to see if the town cannot be kept together. A butter factory has been erected, and the people are going to see whether it will pay to establish dairies and produce cream for the factory. It will mean that Charters Towers will be able to supply Cloncurry and all the Western places with butter. When people endeavour to keep the town going they deserve better treatment than they are getting under this vote.

Mr. FREE (*South Brisbane*): With regard to giving subsidies to public parks, I would like to see a regulation that there be no subsidy for parks if the controllers of the parks make it their business to let certain portions to clubs and societies. We have parks round about the city where certain areas are let to certain clubs at a yearly rental. The consequence is that the best part of the parks are selected by the clubs, and dogs and children of the ratepayers are not permitted to enter. We find all these enclosures locked up and the gates padlocked. We have the croquet clubs doing this sort of thing, so that the ratepayers' children cannot enjoy the pleasure of playing in the park. Then, again, we have a club there which makes a drinking-place of one part of the park. Hon. members opposite talk about closing hotels at 6 o'clock, but they say nothing about their friends in the bowling club drinking until 7 or 8 o'clock at night after their games of bowls are finished.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Why don't you stop them?

Mr. FREE: No Government has attempted to stop them, although I have raised my voice against it. It is high time that sort of thing was stopped. I think that when the reserves and parks are set apart for the benefit of the ratepayers' children that they should be used for that purpose, and not used by croquet clubs. The same thing applies to Davies Park, as I believe that the council have let portion of that park at a rental of £5 per year. I object to the use of parks for that purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I quite endorse all that the hon. member for

Queenton has said in regard to the energy of the people of Charters Towers in beautifying Lissner Park. I would like to point out, though, that Charters Towers is not exactly on the same plane as the cities. The hon. member admits that Brisbane is a national affair, while Rockhampton and Townsville cannot be regarded in the same light as Charters Towers. I would be only too pleased to make grants to places like Charters Towers. With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Aubigny, I admit that the policemen have been of great assistance to the department, and have rendered valuable service. They also carry out other duties, and are of great assistance to other departments, for which they get no remuneration. We could not pay the police for all the services they render. The matter the hon. member for Aubigny refers to is a matter that is invested in the local councils, and is more a matter for them than for the Agricultural Department.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I would like to know if it is possible to find out if any steps have been taken to cope with the pest that has made itself very prevalent in the Brisbane gardens? I refer to the paspalum growing there. Even a few years ago you could walk through the gardens, and you would not see one paspalum plant, but in the last year or so it has grown to such an extent that it has become a perfect nuisance, and it is now spreading from one end of the gardens to the other.

Mr. MAY: It will spread all over Brisbane.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think the citizens of Brisbane will be glad to hear if anything is done to prevent the spread of such a nuisance. It is going to be a costly job to get rid of it, and I would like to know if there is any means of dealing with it? This is a matter of interest not only to the people connected with the gardens, but to those people who are trying to keep decent surroundings at their homes in and around Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The matter will receive earnest attention.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am glad to hear it. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman has heard it to-night for the first time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am aware of it, but you cannot do anything while this wet weather lasts.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is a matter that deserves serious attention.

Mr. PETRIE: I would like to ask if the Secretary for Agriculture can see his way to have the gardens lit up on more than one night in the week. The only night that the gardens are available to the public is Sunday night. I know there is a difficulty in getting carbons, but if it is possible I would like to see the gardens lit up more frequently during the summer months.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have great difficulty in getting carbons, and we have to exercise great care with the stock that we have got.

Resolution 86 agreed to.

Resolutions 87 to 92 agreed to.

On resolution 93—"Miscellaneous Services, Department of Agriculture and Stock"—

Mr. MOORE: I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the noxious weeds which are springing up all over the

Mr. Moore.]

place. We find there are a lot of new weeds springing up, and we hardly recognise what they are. New weeds are declared as noxious weeds, and before we can discover them they have been growing for six months. I suggest that the Minister should exhibit these weeds at the different shows.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We do exhibit them at the Brisbane show in August.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman should exhibit them at all the country shows, where the people can see them and where they will learn what the noxious weeds are like. All the roads are becoming infested [8.30 p.m.] with new kinds of noxious weeds.

There is a new species of box thorn which no one knew anything about, and it had got a good hold before there was any possibility of eradicating it. I hope some scheme will be introduced whereby the different weeds can be illustrated and shown to the people. New weeds are coming up from the South and spreading here, and unless we educate the people by some means in regard to these noxious weeds we are going to have some bad curses in Queensland.

Mr. MAY: I have noticed a noxious weed called the dock weed at Mayne Junction, where one would think it was being cultivated as a shrub. It will be disseminated all over the country if it is not done away with. I do not think I have seen such a splendid specimen of the dock weed as what is being cultivated on the Mayne Junction Station. That is one of the worst noxious weeds we can have. I suggest that the Minister should ask the department to instruct the officers of that railway station to eradicate the weed.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister should cause a collection of the various noxious weeds introduced into Queensland to be made, so that the people may see the danger of them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have such a collection.

Mr. CORSER: In the vaults of the Department of Agriculture. If you go down to find out what a particular weed is, you will probably be given some scientific name which is of no value to the average person in the community. The Minister should see that specimens of these weeds are distributed and made known through the medium of the schools. There is no better way of illustrating the danger of these weeds than by giving specimens to the school children.

I understand that it is a close season at present for native bears in Queensland, and I suggest that the Minister should consider the advisability of protecting bears altogether and not allowing them to be killed. He can do that by prohibiting the sale of the skins. The native bear is one of the few animals that we can boast of as characteristic of Australia. I hope the Minister will issue regulations to prevent the destruction of the bears. They are animals which cannot protect themselves in any way.

Resolution 93 agreed to.

Resolutions 94 to 163 agreed to.

On resolution 164—“Vote on Account, 1918-1919, £900,000”—

HON. J. TOLMIE: I do not think for one moment that the House will in its sane senses agree to this resolution. I hope the time has come to pass when reflection will induce the Government to agree to the elimination of this resolution. I spoke as strongly against

the practice which the Government proposed to introduce as I could last night, but I feel so strongly in relation to the matter that I desire to emphasise my objection again to-night. This is the introduction of a practice that is essentially vicious, and likely to be subversive of our system of parliamentary government. I do not think that hon. members, on reflection, will be easy in their minds if they vote for the retention of this resolution.

The TREASURER: The resolution has already been carried.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It has been carried, but I disapprove of it so strongly that I am going to divide the House again. I want to emphasise the matter so that the public may realise the viciousness of the principle which the Government has introduced. Under a resolution of this kind we shall be putting in the thin end of the wedge for the destruction of parliamentary government. The excellence of our government depends upon the fact that Parliament meets annually, and that system has been in vogue for over 500 years. It is laid down as an inalienable right that there should be discussion of grievances before Supply is granted; but under the principle now being introduced into this Chamber that is likely to be done away with, and we shall have no opportunity of the discussion of grievances. If this House has power to pass Supply for the year 1918-19, then it has power to pass Supply for the year 1920, and a vicious Parliament coming in with a great majority, and relying on the precedent we are seeking to establish now, might say after the first session that they would have no Parliament for two years, and that all that was necessary was that they should pass sufficient money for the Government to carry on with. The Government asks us to entrust them with the sum of £900,000, and they call it a vote on account; but it is not on account of the present year. When the Governor opened Parliament this year he told us that the Estimates of the present year would be framed.

The TREASURER: It is a common practice in New South Wales and New Zealand.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman has no evidence that it is a common practice.

The TREASURER: Yes, I have. It is resorted to every year.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is mere assertion on his part. We have heard so much from the hon. member that his word does not stand for much with regard to that.

The TREASURER: My word is worth more than yours in regard to that. I am not going to bandy words with the hon. gentleman.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It is questionable whether men who are returned to Parliament and expected to behave as honourable men are going to fritter away the rights of citizens, whether men are going to be honourable or corrupt, whether they are going to be scrupulously honest or to act unscrupulously. The Government are taking advantage of the strength they possess to do something that is absolutely contrary to the precedent of the British Parliament. If the Government has the right to grant Supply for one month of next year, then it has the right to grant Supply for the whole of the year, and that being the case we should have

[Mr. Moore

no meeting of Parliament at all. Does not Parliament meet so that the actions of the Government may be criticised, and because of their desire to introduce legislation? If Supply has been exhausted, following the universal practice of centuries the Government must come down and ask Parliament to grant them Supply. That is the sole reason why Parliament meets every year, and if we take away that reason for the meeting of Parliament we put the power into the hands of a Government to do just as they please in regard to what sessions of Parliament shall be held. In a way, the will of the people is being defeated, and the representatives of the people are entirely in the hands of the Cabinet, which can call, or refuse to call, Parliament together, as it feels disposed. As far as I know, this Government is the first under the British flag to introduce this innovation. There are occasions when it is found necessary to vote a large sum of money for a particular purpose, but not for the general administration of the State. Such an event was when Great Britain decided to free all the slaves under the British flag, and a sum of £20,000,000 was voted for that purpose over and above the money which it would be necessary to spend during that year, because the operation involved such an immense amount of labour that it could not be completed at the time. Such an emergency as that may call for the voting of a special sum of money, but for the general purpose of the Administration of the country it should not be allowed. What is essential is that Ministers who have the control of the finances of the State should meet Parliament once every year, and place before it the commitments for the current year, and give Parliament an opportunity of saying whether those sums should be voted or not. It is only by having complete control of the exchequer that Parliament is able to do its duty. I am exceedingly sorry that this occasion should have arisen and that we should have to take the stand we have taken in regard to this matter. I can only voice my disapproval of the action that has been resorted to. I know I am standing on good, high, solid ground, on safe ground in doing what I am, endeavouring to preserve the constitution unscathed and as strong as it was when transmitted to us fifty-three years ago. But here the Government are trying to undermine that constitution and the result is that if we have a Government of this kind in power for any length of time, the whole of our Constitution will have been whittled away. Numerically, we are not in a position to resist this vote going through, although we can mark disapproval. We know that "Todd" and "May," who are our guides when our Standing Orders fail to guide us, are pronouncedly against what is being done here, and if we are wise in this Chamber, we will listen to reason, the reason which has come down to us for ages, and not take the steps we are doing to undermine the Constitution and to undermine Parliament itself by asking it to vote sums of money for years beyond that in which we are engaged. I trust that the good sense of the House will prevail on this occasion, and that this resolution will be rejected.

Colonel RANKIN: I think the greatest, and at the same time the gravest, objection

to this vote lies in the fact that we are seeking to vote Supply beyond the life of the present Parliament.

The TREASURER: Every Parliament has to do that; otherwise there would be no Supply to carry on after the elections.

Colonel RANKIN: Not necessarily for this length of time. We know that the life of this Parliament expires in May, 1918, and we are now seeking to vote money for Supply for the year 1918-19, and it is within the bounds of possibility that the personnel of this House may be entirely changed before this vote has been utilised. What right have we to vote money which should be voted by the new Parliament? The Treasurer says that he has precedents established in the cases of New South Wales and New Zealand.

The TREASURER: And Queensland.

Colonel RANKIN: We know how the circumstances arose in Queensland, but I doubt very much whether in New South Wales or New Zealand they had similar circumstances to Queensland. An illustration was given by the leader of the Opposition a short time ago, where, on one occasion, the practice of the House of Commons was departed from through the House of Commons voting a sum of £20,000,000 to liberate all the slaves under the British Crown. It seems to me that here, in voting this sum in advance, it is for the purpose of strengthening the fetters on the freedom-loving people of Queensland, making them stronger than they are at the present time, when they see already, perhaps, the dawn of that freedom to which the people of Queensland are so ardently looking. In doing that, are we not certainly going to prejudice the actions of a future Parliament by voting a sum for a month in advance of the life of this Parliament? There is no justification for it; it was pointed out time and again last night that if the elections are held at the usual time, giving the longest period possible—May or June—there is nothing to prevent the usual practice being followed of the House assembling in the first week of July and voting the necessary Supply. It is no doubt within your memory, Mr. Speaker, that on many previous occasions, when Supply was being voted at the commencement of each session of Parliament, and the motion was moved to suspend the Standing Orders to enable Supply to go through in one day, the present Treasurer, when in opposition, always opposed it on the ground that Parliament should have been called together earlier. That was the continuous burden of his song.

The TREASURER: I never opposed Supply.

Colonel RANKIN: When the hon. member opposed the suspension of the Standing Orders for the purpose of passing a Supply Bill through all stages in one day, he was opposing the granting of Supply. He advocated continually that Parliament should be called together earlier. The pages of "Hansard" ring with the statements of the Treasurer in that regard when he was on this side of the House. Now he seeks, not only that the House should not be called together in July, but that it should not be necessary to call the House together until August. As the leader of the Opposition clearly pointed out, it would be just as reasonable to ask for three or four or five months' Supply. There is no reason why the Government should restrict itself to one

*Colonel Rankin.]*

month, or five weeks, as I believe this is. Nor has any reason been shown why this extraordinary practice should be pursued. The life of this Parliament expires during the first six months of next year, and no reason in the world has been advanced why we should depart from the well-known principle of Constitutional Government, which lays down that Parliament should meet annually—that we should satisfy ourselves by voting a year's Supply, and nothing more. The two precedents in this Chamber, to which the Treasurer has referred, may have been justifiable on grounds which do not obtain in this case. One of those grounds is that it was not at the end of the Parliament. There was no possibility of a new Parliament being elected. It was done in each case to enable the Chief Secretary to make an extended visit to England on account of the affairs of the State, and no one knows that better than the Treasurer himself. In one case it was Dr. Kidston, who required to go home on State affairs; and, in the second case, it was the present Chief Secretary. That may have justified—I do not say it did—a departure from a well-recognised and established principle, but neither of those things apply this year. It is merely some motive that we are not acquainted with; and I think it is such a dubious proposition that we ought to warn, not only the House, but the country against it. We know that in most of the legislation brought before us by the present Government we have had to look beneath the surface to see how those measures were loaded—and the same thing applies to this. No reason can be assigned for a departure from the well-known and usual practice of voting only a year's Supply, except some flimsy reason given by the Treasurer last night that it would give more time after the election for the incoming Government to prepare their policy.

The TREASURER: If the elections were held late in May I said it was impossible to call Parliament together early in July.

Colonel RANKIN: If the elections were held on the 22nd May—which, I think, was the date of the last elections—we could meet next year, as we met in 1915, in the first week of July. There was nothing to prevent the present Government from meeting then. If, after the last general election—when we had a new Government coming into office, that had never held office before, having to formulate their policy and get acquainted with all the ropes—if they could do it in the time at their disposal between the 22nd May and the second week in July, surely there is no necessity in the present case for such a thing not taking place! I submit that we have not been shown—and it is just as well that the country should know it—any reason for this extraordinary departure from a well-known principle. If we allowed this practice to become a permanent one—

The TREASURER: It should be a permanent practice.

Colonel RANKIN: There is a very great danger attaching to it. If you can vote a month's Supply in advance, why not vote three months' Supply?

The TREASURER: I say it should be a permanent practice to get a month's on account of the new financial year.

Colonel RANKIN: The danger is the same as the Treasurer spoke about when he

[Colonel Rankin.

was in opposition—about Parliament being called together so late. If you are going to allow this as a regular practice, you will probably see Parliament meeting in September, and see three months devoted to business. It is the hon. gentleman's own lips he stands condemned by. On this side of the House he was constantly urging that the Government was guilty of delay in not calling Parliament together earlier than July. Now he says it should be an established practice that Supply should be granted for a month after the end of the financial year in order to enable them to put off the meeting of Parliament until August.

The TREASURER: I did not say to enable Parliament to be put off until August.

Colonel RANKIN: I shall be very glad to hear from the hon. gentleman what object it can serve.

The TREASURER: What danger can you see in it?

Colonel RANKIN: I conceive the danger in an innovation—a departure from a well-established practice. There is a danger that once you allow a pernicious practice of this kind to creep in you do not know how far it will go. We are actually voting money to be expended by people who possibly will not be here.

The TREASURER: If they are not here, they will not be spending the money.

Colonel RANKIN: We are placing money at the disposal of people who may not be here.

The TREASURER: How could they spend the money if they are not here?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The minority may be there, and hold on.

The TREASURER: Do you say if any Government is defeated it goes on until Supply is exhausted?

Colonel RANKIN: I would not put it beyond the present Government.

The TREASURER: There was nothing to prevent your Government from doing it, but they did not, and no other Government would.

Colonel RANKIN: There is no getting away from the fact that in the authorities quoted by the leader of the Opposition, both in "Todd" and "May," it is pointed out very clearly that what we are contending for is a well-defined and well-established principle, laid down from time immemorial. Now the Treasurer seeks to depart from it.

The TREASURER: I have listened to the speeches of the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Burrum, and their attack upon the resolution which is now before the House. They both allege that it is a dangerous practice, which leads to pernicious results, but neither of them has been able to show exactly what the danger is, or where the pernicious practice comes in.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I told you that you could go on without calling Parliament together at all.

The TREASURER: You said we could go on year after year if we had one month's supply.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It is not the one month; it is the principle underlying it.

The TREASURER: It is one month we are asking for, and I have already stated that it would be a good thing if it were a

permanent practice to get a month's Supply for the Treasurer on account of the succeeding financial year.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Amend the Constitution to enable you to do it.

The TREASURER: The Constitution does not need to be amended to enable us to do it. If we wanted to get statutory authority for it, we would not be amending the Constitution. I want to know where the danger is in asking for a month's Supply? We are not asking for twelve months' or five years' or a century's. Where is the danger in one month?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: There is no danger in one month. It is the principle involved.

The TREASURER: If there is no danger why all this objection? The hon. member said it was pernicious. Wherein is it pernicious?

Colonel RANKIN: Because it assists to delay in calling Parliament together.

The TREASURER: The hon. member said that if we got this month's Supply we need not call Parliament together until September. How will this enable us to carry on until September? It only shows that the hon. member's opposition is simply factious.

Colonel RANKIN: You are misleading the House, because you know you are getting Supply until August.

The TREASURER: We are not.

Colonel RANKIN: You are getting over £900,000.

The TREASURER: We are asking for £500,000 from the consolidated revenue fund. That will not be sufficient Supply to carry us over August. I mentioned last night that out of that we have to meet the mid-monthly pay in August. Parliament will have to meet before the mid-monthly pay in August in order to grant additional Supply, otherwise the public servants could not be paid. That is why I am asking for it on this occasion. The circumstances are different to what they were only a year or two ago.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No.

The TREASURER: Yes. There is a heavier pay in the middle of July.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Have your elections in time, and do the thing properly.

The TREASURER: Parliament, under the Constitution, has the right to live for three years. If Parliament expires by effluxion of time late in May, the elections might be held in June. Even if the elections were held in the last week in May, there is very little chance of getting Parliament together in time to grant Supply to meet the mid-monthly pay. Why should we be tied to such a narrow and dangerous margin? If the Government desired, they could meet payments for all the ordinary circumstances on the authority of an Executive minute. But we don't desire to do that; we want to get the authority of Parliament, and we are asking Parliament to grant us—under the circumstances which exist—one month's Supply for next year.

Mr. FORSYTH: What are the circumstances that exist?

The TREASURER: The circumstances are, as I have already stated—that the mid-monthly pay is heavier than it has ever been before, and we must get a Supply Bill through after the annual Appropriation in order to provide for the July pay. The margin of time is too narrow. Unless

Parliament wants to be unfair, conservative, and unduly restrictive in its control of the Government in these matters, it should grant this vote on account of 1918-19.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: What is the Governor there for but to understand the circumstances of the country and issue his warrant?

The TREASURER: The hon. member would favour carrying on without Parliament?

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: No.

The TREASURER: What does the hon. gentleman suggest? I know that a minority at one time—supported by the hon. member—carried on for months without the authority of a Supply Bill—on the authority of the Governor's warrants. Apparently that is what the hon. member wants. But that would be a dangerous thing. I think I have shown that there is nothing dangerous, and that there is nothing pernicious in this practice. We are simply asking for a month's Supply—not twelve months', two years', or a century's Supply. It will only give us one month's more time beyond the annual Appropriation in order to enable us to carry on the business of the country. Parliament will have to meet and a Supply Bill will have to be passed early in August, at the latest, even if this resolution is adopted.

Mr. FORSYTH: In connection with this matter, I really cannot see why the Government should depart from the usual practice, which was to pass an Appropriation Bill covering expenditure to the end of the financial year. Anyone who will look up "May" and "Todd" will see that Supply should be granted only to the end of the financial year.

The TREASURER: New South Wales annually makes arrangements of this nature; so does New Zealand.

Mr. FORSYTH: What is the reason for the hon. gentleman asking for it? Did not we have the elections on the 22nd May; did not we meet in the last week in July? The hon. gentleman says it is because of much heavier payments. If we have a million a year more, all you have to do is to put them in the Supplementary Estimates and pass them in an Appropriation Bill at the end, as we are doing now.

The TREASURER: What I was referring to is the heavier fortnightly pay.

Mr. FORSYTH: It does not matter whether it is fortnightly or monthly. If you have not the money necessary to go on to the end of June, you can get it; this House will not refuse you that. What is the reason for the Government asking this? They say, "We have payments to meet at the end of June." As a matter of fact, the bill at the end of June is a very much larger one than it is in any other month of the year, unless it is at the end of December, when we have to pay the interest bill, the same as we have to in June. But what is the object of the Government asking for an extra month in 1918-19? The hon. gentleman says it is because of extra expenditure. That is no excuse at all, because we can easily meet in July. What is to hinder our meeting in July? We met in July after the last election, and the elections did not take place until 22nd May.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It was almost impossible to manage it.

*Mr. Forsyth.*]

Mr. FORSYTH: If the Government want it for the purpose of paying liabilities which become due in June, have the elections a little earlier.

The TREASURER: Why not have them on the 20th December?

Mr. FORSYTH: If the hon. gentleman wanted the elections on the 20th December, he would have to apply for two or three millions instead of £900,000.

The TREASURER: This month—in a fortnight's time.

Mr. FORSYTH: Oh, I see! In any case, the Government have some special object in view in asking for this thing. It is quite true it has been done before. It was done to allow the Premier to go home to London. Moneys have been passed even in the House of Commons for special things. If the Government would tell us what the special thing is it would be all right; but we cannot get the information from them. I was not here last night when the hon. gentleman was speaking, but I have read it in the House to-day; and I say there has been no reason given. If the Government could give us some substantial reason why they want it, we could go upon information given. But they simply state, "We want this because of big payments which have to be met in July."

The TREASURER: No, I did not say because of big payments. We must get a Supply Bill early in July to meet the fortnightly pay.

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course, you must; but we have had to do that for the last twenty-five years. In fact, every year we have to do the same thing.

The TREASURER: It is most inconvenient.

Mr. FORSYTH: While these things, of course, are unusual, they have happened before. But that is no reason why we should continue a practice which is against all the constitutional authorities who give rulings on the point. Take "Todd." He states distinctly that a Supply Bill is for the current year; and he puts it in italics—showing that the money passed through the House is for that special purpose. There is not the slightest reason, so far as I can see, why we should grant Supply into another year. I hope the House will not pass something on which we have no information as to why the Government want it; except that they state they have not much time from the date of the general election. If the Government think they have not sufficient time, they can have the elections a month earlier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We cannot do that.

Mr. FORSYTH: The principle is bad, as a rule; it is against constitutional government. And besides, if you ask for one month, why can't you ask for three; why can't you ask for six? If you once break the rule you can continue to any extent. I have heard no argument yet why we should pass an extra £900,000 for next year.

The TREASURER: You supported it on two previous occasions.

Mr. FORSYTH: I hope the House will not pass it.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: The whole thing appears to me to be this: That the Government are attempting to alter the financial year from the 30th June to some time in July. That has been their policy

[Mr. Forsyth.

all through since they got on to the Treasury benches. Now, if they are going to extend the financial year to the end of July, why not come down openly and ask for it? It is useless to recapitulate the arguments adduced here, which are well known to the members of the House—from "May" and all the authorities, insisting that there must be some extenuating cause why money should be granted beyond the ordinary period of Parliament. There is also this further argument in the present case—that at the termination of Parliament the people's voice should be heard before any money should be expended into a year beyond the ordinary year, and that is the 30th June, because the present Administration may not be returned at the polls. There is a greater reason in that than in any other reason. If the Government say that they have arrangements to make, then let them hold the elections earlier. Just because the Secretary for Public Instruction says forsooth that floods will stop the elections, that is no reason why we should grant this extra Supply. Does he know what the conditions of Queensland will be next year? How is he able to forecast what the condition of the weather will be next year when he talks about the possibility of floods. I am sure that the Treasurer does not accept that as a reason. When the Treasurer was speaking a moment or two ago, he did not give that as a reason. I quite admit that if the necessity arises in connection with an incoming Government, if it is stronger than the Government that went out of power, then it is right for the Governor to issue his warrant for Supply. That is one of the great uses of the Governor—to act when exceptional cases arise. We have a constitutional precedent for that. The Governor can issue his warrant to pay these services in the case of a new incoming Government. All our constitutional government has been based on the precedent that Supply is granted only until the financial year is ended. The money is voted for the financial year only and for no further period. That is why I object to the action of this Government. Ever since they have been sitting on the Treasury benches, their idea is to cover up their expenditure every financial year. Instead of closing their accounts on the 30th June and making that the end of the financial year, they carry it on until the following year. The Treasurer shakes his head, but you have only got to look at the Auditor-General's report to see what I say is true. We all know that in Sir Hugh Nelson's time they used to make a point of writing to the different departments throughout Queensland and asking them to telegraph to the central authority in Brisbane, letting them know the exact position in which they stood, and money was set aside to cover the liabilities. The country knew then absolutely on the 30th June, what the payments were for the financial year. The full amounts owing were then made known, although they were not actually drawn by voucher at the time. This Government, instead of following that practice, do not close the year on the 30th June at all.

The TREASURER: Would the Governor's approval be sufficient justification?

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: In the case of an incoming Government, the Governor's approval would be sufficient justification.

The TREASURER: The Governor has already recommended this.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: The Governor, as the head of the Executive Council, has recommended this upon the usual automatic advice of the Government. It appears to me that the Government want to cover up their disbursements in the financial year ended on the 30th June, and we will not know until next June twelve months what the payments for 1917 were, and we will not receive the report of the Auditor-General upon these accounts until the September following. I hope the principle will not be accepted now, because it is a wrong principle. It has been stated that there were precedents in New South Wales and New Zealand, and also in the British House of Commons. There were urgent reasons for its being done on those occasions. If there is any reason why it should be done on this occasion I hope the Treasurer will explain it.

The TREASURER: There is not a sufficient margin of safety between the general election and the meeting of Parliament.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: How has Queensland carried on then for the last fifty years without doing it?

The TREASURER: Queensland has not carried on for fifty years without doing it. It was done on two occasions.

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Well, we have carried on for forty-eight years, and why should it be done now? I consider it is an immoral thing to do it just on the eve of a closing Parliament. Presumably—if I may say presumably—we have an outgoing Government, which will leave a position in the Treasury that is not known to the incoming Government. Surely that is a wrong principle! It is one that has been safeguarded from time immemorial. The constitution of all the dominions which go to form the British Empire has safeguarded that very thing, and I hope we will not go against it on this occasion.

Mr. CORSER: I cannot help objecting to the action of the Treasurer in asking for this appropriation. We have been told that there is going to be an early election, so why the necessity for this Appropriation?

The TREASURER: You do not understand it.

Mr. CORSER: I do understand it. That is the hon. gentleman's trouble. I think it will be quite sufficient to grant Supply for the financial year, because the first month of the next financial year might not belong to this Government at all. We expect an early appeal to the electors, and, therefore, there will be no need to have this extra Supply. It has never been done before, and there is no reason why we should do it on this occasion.

The TREASURER: It has been done on two occasions.

Mr. CORSER: Under different circumstances altogether. As there is a possibility of an early election, I do not see why we should grant the Government £900,000. The Treasurer has not given us any reason why we should do it.

Mr. FORSYTH: Perhaps the Premier is going home.

Mr. CORSER: The Government have spent a lot of money in different enterprises, and now they want Supply for a month that belongs to another Government altogether. I am prepared to vote against it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I suppose we will get an explanation why this proposal is brought

forward some time in August next, and we will then find the special reasons for asking for this Appropriation. The hon. gentleman said that this has been done on two occasions before, but as the comments that have been made in regard to those two occasions have not been made as clear as they ought to have been made, I would suggest that on those occasions a similar proposal was submitted to this House, and the House was not taken fully into the confidence of the Government as to their nature. They were introduced at the tail-end of the session after forcing through Supply, and the attention of the House was not specifically drawn to them.

The TREASURER: You were a party to granting it on one occasion.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member and his colleagues made bitter complaint in regard to what happened during the Ministry of Mr. Kidston, and it was acknowledged on this side of the House that it was slipped through the year before last.

The TREASURER: Slipped through? We came before the House with a specific resolution.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Those reasons are of no value at all. For the last fifty years the practice has not been resorted to. As a matter of fact, on the 20th May next Parliament will have run its full period of three years; and, under the legislation we have at the present time, hon. members will get their full remuneration for the full period of three years, because the remuneration is carried right up to the date of the election of their successors. There is no reason in the world why we should not have the election on the 22nd May. Nobody, so far as members are concerned, will be the sufferer by that. If we hold the election on the 22nd May, there is nothing to prevent us from meeting the House on the same date as we met the House in 1915, without any inconvenience to anybody. There is no reason in the world for the imposition of these terms, unless it is for some reason which the Government have not thought it necessary to inform the House on. I would like to pose as a little bit of a prophet. I venture to say that when we are discussing this business in August next we will be able to refer to this debate and to what has taken place in the interim.

Mr. WELLINGTON: You will still be in opposition.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman will not be here. Any person who is interested in preserving the protection which the Constitution provides ought to stand by and give that protection to the Constitution which the situation calls for. As an Opposition we are bound to do it. We are not going to fail in our duty in any case. We have pointed it out, and if anything happens to the Bill that is going to be founded on this resolution, then let hon. gentlemen on the other side take the fullest responsibility for it. We will have hon. gentlemen going to the country complaining about another Chamber for protecting the interests of the citizens of Queensland.

The TREASURER: Are you inciting them?

Mr. MACARTNEY: No. I say that this Chamber can best protect its own rights by observing the law and Constitution. I say that the Government are asking us for more than it is in our power to grant. We are called upon to provide money that has been voted, and the Government are asking us for money which they ought not to get,

*Mr. Macartney.]*

particularly as we are near the end of the Parliament, and, as has been stated by other speakers, the position may be that the Government may hold on to the reins of office and continue the administration of the country, though in a minority, by reason of the vote we are asked to pass to-night.

The TREASURER: Do you say that all Governments run on until their supply is exhausted?

Mr. MACARTNEY: We know that the present Government is not an ordinary Government; and we know that they will do what other Governments never stooped to do. We have to look at the character of the men we are dealing with. We are asked to give a blank cheque to the Government, who have not scrupled in any way to defy the Constitution or to interfere with the liberty of the people.

The TREASURER: That statement shows the destitution of your argument.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I stand here not to say what the hon. gentleman wishes, but what I think is right. I stand here to say what I think is right for the [9.30 p.m.] tection of the people of Queensland. With the experience we have had of the present Government, no one can speak too strongly as to what may happen if matters are left in the hands of hon. gentlemen on the other side. (Hear, hear!)

Question—That resolution 164, "Vote on Account, 1918-1919, £900,000" be agreed to—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 22.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lennon
" Bertram	" May
" Coyne	" McLachlan
" Dunstan	" O'Sullivan
" Fihelly	" Payne
" Free	" Peterson
" Gledson	" Theodore
" Hardacre	" Weir
" Hartley, W.	" Wellington
" Hunter	" Wilson
" Jones	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. W. Hartley and Mr. Peterson.

NOES, 18.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Macartney
" Barnes	" Moore
" Bayley	" Petrie
" Bell	Col. Rankin
" Bridges	Mr. Somerset
" Corser	" Stodart
" Forsyth	" Swayne
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Corser.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## WAYS AND MEANS.

### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Bertram, Marce, in the chair.)

The TREASURER moved—

"(a) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1917-18, a further sum not exceeding £3,945,446 be granted out of the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account.

"(b) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1917-18, a further sum not exceeding £1,001,849 ls. be granted from the trust and special funds.

"(c) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the

[Mr. Macartney.

service of the year 1917-18, a further sum not exceeding £1,355,100 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account.

"(d) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1916-17, a supplementary sum not exceeding £320,809 13s. be granted out of the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account.

"(e) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1916-17, a supplementary sum not exceeding £560,980 13s. be granted from the trust and special funds.

"(f) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1916-17, a supplementary sum not exceeding £180,818 6s. 4d. be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account.

"(g) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1918-19, a sum not exceeding £500,000 be granted out of the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account.

"(h) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1918-19, a sum not exceeding £250,000 be granted from the trust and special funds.

"(i) That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1918-19, a sum not exceeding £150,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account."

HON. J. TOLMIE pointed out that paragraphs (g), (h), and (i) did not meet with his approval, but he would not go over the ground he went over last night and to-day. He only rose for the purpose of again making his protest against the unconstitutional practice which the House was adopting, and which was so subversive of good [9.30 p.m.] Government, and could be made an instrument for wrongdoing in the hands of an unscrupulous Government. He entered his protest on behalf of himself and those who were sitting on the Opposition side of the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

The TREASURER: I beg to move—That the resolution be now received.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER: I suggest that the House take the resolutions as read.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The resolutions were agreed to by the House.

## APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 4.

### FIRST READING.

The TREASURER presented a Bill founded upon the resolutions, and it was read a first time.



SECOND READING.

The TREASURER: I beg to move—That the Bill be now read a second time

HON. J. TOLMIE: I rise to protest against the second reading of the Bill, for the reasons I have already given. It is ultra vires the Constitution, and subversive of good Government, because it contains an eminently bad principle, and I consider it my duty to oppose it at every stage. I am not going to go beyond expressing—on behalf of myself and those on this side—our strong disapproval, and our fear that it is going to result in the misgovernment of the State of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"Appropriation"—

HON. J. TOLMIE: He again entered his protest against the passing of clause 2 of the Bill, which contained an unconstitutional principle, which should be reprobated by every member of the Committee who believed in good and sound Government.

Clause put and passed.

The remaining clauses and schedules were passed without discussion.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment, and the report was agreed to.

THIRD READING.

The Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—That the Committee agree to the Legislative Council's amendment.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Council by message in the usual form.

PUBLIC WORKS LAND RESUMPTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE OF 4TH DECEMBER.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—That the Committee do not insist upon their disagreement to the amendment upon which the Legislative Council insisted.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with message to that effect.

WOONGARRA TRAMWAY BILL.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the Bill without amendment. (Hear, hear!)

STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"Mr. Speaker,—

"The Legislative Council having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly of date 4th December, relative to the State Iron and Steel Works Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Insist on the omission of the words in clause 3, lines 12 to 16, and on the insertion, in lieu thereof, of the words on lines 16 to 19—because the amendment is in accord with the amended title of the Bill and will give the Government full means, power, and opportunity for establishing State coke, iron, and steel works;

"Insist on their amendments in clause 3, lines 40 to 42, and lines 53 to 55—because it is a most reasonable one and quite necessary to keep the transaction within the powers conferred by the Act;

"Insist on their amendment in clause 3, page 3, lines 16 and 17—because it is reasonable that the owner as well as the Government should have the option as to method of payment;

"Insist on their amendment in clause 3, page 3, lines 55 to 57, for reasons previously assigned;

"Insist on their amendments in clause 9 (now 8)—because—

1. The original clause may be read to give to a Minister or State officer authority to incur limitless expense free from any check or revision and without Parliament ever knowing of the amount or the specific objects of the expense;

2. The original clause would allow of secret agreements, unknown to Parliament and dangerous to the public interests;

3. Money already spent without sanction of Parliament should be plainly set forth in a schedule to the Bill;

"Insist on their amendment in clause 10 (now 9)—because some reasonable limit is required for an initial grant to test the ore deposits, indicate a site, and carry through any preliminary work that may be found necessary before next Parliament meets;

"Insist on the insertion of new clause 11, for reasons previously assigned;

"Insist on their amendment in the title omitting the words 'and other industries, and for other purposes'—because otherwise the title would not be in conformity with the sections of the Bill; and

"Do not insist on their amendment in clause 3, page 3, lines 50 to 53."

The consideration in Committee of the Council's message was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The TREASURER: I beg to move—That the House, at its rising, do adjourn to half-past 6 o'clock p.m. to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 10 o'clock p.m.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]