

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1877

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 5 September, 1877.

Petition.—Personal Explanation.—Formal Business.—Supply.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past three o'clock.

PETITION.

Mr. PALMER presented a petition from the Directors of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company, praying for a Bill to give effect in Queensland to the alteration of the name of the "Liverpool and London Fire and Life Insurance Company," and to enable "The Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company" to sue and be sued in the name of the company, &c., &c.

Petition received.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. PALMER wished to correct a statement appearing in the *Courier's* Parliamentary report. He was reported to have said that the Brisbane Grammar School was built on ground to which the trustees had no right. He said nothing of the sort. What he did say was, that the Government had paid for some grounds connected with the Grammar School to which it had no right, that ground having been reserved for public purposes.

FORMAL BUSINESS.

The following motions were carried :—

By Mr. IVORY—

That there be laid on the table of the House, the report of the sub-immigration agent at Maryborough, together with all telegrams, papers, and correspondence, as well as valuator's report of the case investigated on board the schooner "Chance," from the Herbert

River with return Islanders, respecting "trade" supplied to said Islanders by the agent for that vessel.

By Mr. WALSH—

That there be laid upon the table of the House,—

1. Copy of the telegram, dated 1st August, referred to in the communication of same date, from the land agent at Gympie, the latter being styled a further return to an Order of this House.

2. Copies of all other communications from the 17th July last, between the Land Office and other persons relative to the reserve of land for timber purposes at Widgee Creek, and respecting the subsequent disposal of same to Messrs. Rogers and Smith.

By Mr. STEWART—

1. That a select committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House, for the purpose of taking into consideration the petition of Dr. Hobbs, presented to this House on the 31st of July last.

2. That such committee consist of Mr. Tyrel, Mr. McIlwraith, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Kingsford, and the mover.

SUPPLY.

The House resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

The question—adjourned from the previous evening—was, that there be granted to Her Majesty the sum of £820 for customs establishment at Ipswich.

Mr. GROOM would like to ask the honourable the Colonial Treasurer whether the Government intended to take any steps towards the formation of bonded warehouses in the interior? When the question came before the House last session it was promised that the matter should receive consideration, and he should now like to know whether that promise had been fulfilled. In New South Wales there were six inland bonded warehouses—one at Wagga Wagga; one at Bourke; one at Bathurst, which was a town analogous to Toowoomba; and one each at Deniliquin, Wilcannia, and Hay. Residents at Bathurst were told that when they had a railway to their town they should have a bonded warehouse, not so much for the benefit of Bathurst as for the benefit of the country around and beyond. He would now ask whether the Government would have any objection to establish a bonded warehouse at Toowoomba, not so much for the convenience of the town of Toowoomba as for the advantage of the important settled district extending westward? Up to the present time no goods intended for bonded warehouses had been forwarded by railway; and he was rather surprised on reading this morning's *Herald* to find that a member of the Government had stated that bonded goods were sent from Brisbane to Ipswich by rail. Such was not the

case. The honourable the Colonial Treasurer stated last session that goods intended for the bonded stores could not be sent by railway unless a locker were sent by the train, which could not, under the existing circumstances, be done. A promise was made that the matter should be considered in the interregnum, and this was why he now asked the honourable the Colonial Treasurer whether he was prepared to take the steps he had pointed out with regard to Toowoomba; and then, by-and-by, when the railway had extended to Roma, he did not see why a bonded warehouse should not be established there. As the head-quarters of the customs were in Brisbane, he could not understand why a bonded warehouse was wanted at a town only twenty-five miles distant. It was only reasonable, therefore, to ask that the establishment at Ipswich should be abandoned altogether, and the salaries paid there transferred to some other district where they would be of more advantage to the country.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the Government had not in contemplation the extension of inland bonded warehouses. If it could be shown that they would be a convenience, and would not be attended by any loss of revenue, the question of their extension might be considered; but he did not wish to encourage the establishment of bonds in the interior. He presumed the honourable member for Toowoomba imagined that, because there was a customs department at Ipswich, he had made out a good case for inland bonds; but he would point out that there was a great difference between establishing a new branch of the customs and maintaining one already in existence. The Ipswich custom-house had been established since the independence of the colony, and its removal would, therefore, be attended with great inconvenience to the residents of that town. He thought the majority of the places mentioned in New South Wales were border stations, where custom-houses were desirable. Bathurst was the only exception.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Deniliquin.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said Deniliquin was within forty miles of the Murray, and connected by rail with Moama, the river port. He was afraid that if inland bonds were established in the colony the expenses connected with their management would largely exceed the revenue derived from them and the convenience that would be given to the public. He would take the opportunity to correct a statement he made last night, that goods had been sent under bond to Ipswich by railway. Arrangements for sending goods in this way had all been completed, and he was informed that some parcels had actually been sent; but it appeared that none had yet been sent. It would not be necessary for a locker to accompany

the railway van; the goods would be taken by a licensed dray to the railway station and placed under seal by the officer of the customs, who would transmit the duplicate key to the officer at Ipswich.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he was very much astonished last night at the statements made so deliberately by the honourable the Colonial Treasurer and the Minister for Works, that goods were sent under bond per railway. All that information now appeared to be false, and it was quite possible that the honourable the Colonial Treasurer's statement, that arrangements had been made to send goods in this way to Ipswich, might also turn out to be false. Seeing that there was a bond at Ipswich, it was only right that facilities for the transmission of goods under bond, per railway, should be given; otherwise, Government would be stultifying themselves and handicapping the railway in favour of the river.

Mr. WALSH said the objections taken to this vote last night were based upon two things—justice and economy: justice, because if a branch was required at Ipswich, it was much more so at Toowoomba, Dalby, and Warwick. The honourable the Colonial Treasurer had said that the objection to the establishment of inland bonds was on account of expense, and, inferentially, he maintained that the objection to the removal of the bond from Ipswich was on account of its very great success. To collect £17,000 per annum the sum of £820 was required, and that, he presumed, was only a portion of the expense, for the value of the buildings had to be taken into account, and there must also be, he imagined, subordinate officers. The officers mentioned in the vote did not do all the work—

Mr. PETTIGREW: Yes, they do.

Mr. WALSH said that, at any rate, £820 was required in the first collection of the £17,000, whereas the whole amount could be collected in Brisbane for next to nothing. So long as this branch was maintained so long had the towns of Toowoomba, Dalby, and Warwick the right to demand branches; and, therefore, the expenses of collecting the customs duties of the colony would go on increasing *ad infinitum*. It was the duty of the committee to check this. He would repeat his suggestion of the previous evening, that instead of abolishing the customs at once, and inconveniencing the business people of Ipswich, timely warning should be given them, and that only six months' estimates should be voted, on the understanding that the bond would not be continued after that.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that £820 was the total amount required to manage the Ipswich custom-house. As regarded the expense for the building, he would remind the committee that the bond was built when the customs

revenue collected at Ipswich varied from £41,000 to £60,000 per annum. Now the collections were from £17,000 to £20,000 a-year, and it was quite possible, he thought, that the bond could be managed for £600. He looked at the retention of the custom-house in this way: Why should he have to pay railway fare to come to Brisbane and get his goods out of bond? Did not the same argument apply equally to Maryborough, Rockhampton, and other towns further north? Of course this business could be done by letter; but no one could tell him that goods could be bought as well by letter as by personal arrangement. He was not so selfish as the honourable member for Toowoomba, who wanted the Ipswich custom-house to be removed to his town. He, on the contrary, should like to see other inland bonds established. Supposing all the goods were sent to the Ipswich bond, and that the business men of Brisbane had to go there for them, would they like that? He did not think so. Considering that all the expense of the building had been incurred, he maintained that the establishment ought not to be abolished. The people of Ipswich could not do without a custom-house, and would not do without one. He could not see what the question of distance from Brisbane had to do with the justice of their claims.

The COLONIAL TREASURER wished to explain that £120 had been received last year for rent in connection with this bond; so that the cost of maintaining it was only about £700. In addition to the £17,000 received for customs' duties, £3,000 had been received for excise. The total receipts were, therefore, £20,000.

Mr. WALSH said that perhaps the honourable Colonial Treasurer would explain what the expenditure in connection with the buildings had been?

Mr. FOX did not think that the argument of the honourable member for Burke, on the principle which that honourable member had himself laid down, ought to have the same weight as the arguments of persons who were not interested in the question. He was perfectly disinterested, and his opinion was that this custom-house should not be maintained unless the Government were prepared to do equal justice to other inland towns. The Government had, however, said that it was not their intention to establish inland bonds at the present time, and on this and other grounds the vote should not be passed. He certainly could not see that a place like Ipswich, situated within twenty miles of Brisbane, should have a bond. There was no reason for it, except that given by the honourable member for Burke, that the buildings were there; but that he did not consider sufficient. He would call the particular attention of the Government to the fact, that whilst they had made immense

efforts to secure the river trade, and had apparently partially succeeded, they had allowed a large proportion of their own trade to go by the river. They had the railway and should make use of it. He was informed that last year the Government promised to remove the bond. He should vote against the item.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he had never heard of such a promise as the honourable member spoke about, and he did not think the present Government ever gave it. At any rate, if he had heard about it he might have given a little more trouble to Ministers this session. With respect to the remarks of the honourable member for Toowoomba, he might say that as soon as the Toowoomba people were plucky enough to erect suitable buildings for a bonded store then he would be in favour of their receiving their goods, under bond, per railway; but he feared that none of the Toowoomba people would be enterprising enough to put up buildings of the description required. Considering, further, the small profits on leading lines in spirits, and what the cost of cartage to the railway station and the rent and bond charges would amount to, he fancied the business men of Toowoomba would prefer to order their requirements in Brisbane and be drawn upon for the duties. It had been said that the custom-house at Ipswich was not required because of the railway; but he would remind the committee that large quantities of goods came to Ipswich direct from England by water, and that it would be very inconvenient to the Ipswich mercantile community if they had to come to Brisbane to see their goods opened and examined by the customs' officers, in order to fix the *ad valorem* duties. He got out some goods lately from home, and would have had to send a man down from Ipswich if they had had to be examined at Brisbane; and with the customs' entries and other charges the cost would have been between £2 and £3. Seeing that there were all the conveniences already at Ipswich, the bond ought not to be abolished. He did not think one shilling had been spent on the building for years. The bond was a very great convenience to the public. It might be worked cheaper when that glorious time came—between this and the millennium—when the Government could see their way to appoint a royal commission to inquire as to what everybody was doing in the various departments. The fact of the matter was, that the Ipswich people could not do without the bond, and did not mean to do without it. This same question was fought almost every session.

Mr. FOX said that the same argument applied to the last speaker as to the honourable member for Burke—he was also an interested party. He (Mr. FOX) had received further information about the

pledge given by Government respecting the Ipswich custom-house, and he was quite positive that Mr. Macalister, in 1875, promised to do away with it, as the completion of the railway would allow of its abolition; he further proposed to do this by only voting salaries for six months. He would be glad to support a motion to that effect now.

Mr. BELL thought the debate useless; the question was purely a local one; and it was not likely that votes would be affected by the discussion. He had, however, some questions to ask, and by the answers to them his vote would be guided. Did the Government intend to stick, hard-and-fast, to the vote for the whole year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. BELL said, they were not, then, prepared to take a half-year's vote. Would they promise that the establishment should cease at the end of the year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, if the revenue derived from the Ipswich custom-house did not show any alteration, he could not give any such promise.

Mr. STEWART said he would be inclined to support a proposition for establishing bonded warehouses in different inland towns, and he had expressed the same opinion to the late Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Hemmant, when in office. Looking at the Estimates of New South Wales, he found the only expense connected with the bond at Bathurst was £250 for a locker. There was no reason why a similar system should not be established here. He would not advocate the formation of regular customs establishments in the inland towns, but bonded warehouses, which could be maintained at a small cost. These might be established according to the rule followed in Brisbane, where none were allowed unless they paid at least £150 a-year, the cost of a locker. In this way they could be opened at practically no expense to the country. The bonds could all be private ones, managed at an expense of from £150 a-year for a locker, and the collection of moneys might be under the supervision of the land agent or other Government official in the place. In this way a great convenience could be afforded to inland traders at very little expense to the country. He thought that the Treasurer should give a pledge that the expense of the establishment at Ipswich would be reduced, now that the railway was opened. He was astonished that the Government had not sent bond goods by railway long ago; there was no more difficulty in doing so than in sending them by water. The goods might be put into proper trucks, and received by draymen licensed and made responsible, as in Brisbane. He hoped that the Treasurer would consider the question whether it would not be possible to reduce this item another year.

Mr. BEATTIE said that he did not see how inland bonds could be established without incurring the expense of a regular establishment like that at Ipswich. Goods liable to *ad valorem* had to be examined, and were they to be sent up country to be examined by a locker? And how was gauging to be done? Was it proposed to do it in Brisbane? It was not likely that consignees would take delivery of goods if they happened to be diminished in quantity. He did not believe that the goods imported into the various towns would pay for the expense of the proposed change.

Mr. GROOM said he believed Queensland officials were as trustworthy as those of New South Wales; and if lockers were able to manage six inland bonds there they could do so here. There was certainly no *ad valorem* duty in that colony; but that was not an insuperable objection. When the bond and custom-house at Ipswich was established, that place was considered the head of navigation, and drays came down from all parts of the interior to load there. Now all that was changed, and the traffic went by railway. It was very probable that the promise made by Mr. Macalister had not been made openly. He was too close to do that; but it had probably been one of those whispers of which he was so fond when he had an object to serve. The subject of discussion should be considered on general, not local, grounds. It was a question whether they should vote £820 unnecessarily; for Ipswich was within twenty-five miles of Brisbane, and connected with it by rail and water. He was surprised that the railway had not been used to carry goods in bond; and he found that, now the A.S.N. Company were selling their steamers, there was a system of licensed lighters in existence. The country had gone to a heavy expense in making the railway, and the Government were actually bolstering up an opposition to it. In order to test the feeling of the committee, he would move that the vote be reduced by £410, so that the establishment at Ipswich might cease to exist at the end of the year. He was not actuated by any interested motives in this motion; it was a matter of no pressing importance to him whether a bonded store was established at Toowoomba; but whatever the Government were prepared to do in that respect, there was no necessity for maintaining the establishment at Ipswich.

Mr. BEATTIE rose to correct a mistake of the honourable member for Toowoomba. Goods in bond were not sent to Ipswich by licensed lighters; and the honourable member might have known that the Collector of Customs would not license any undecked vessel. The fact was simply that a steamer running to Ipswich took goods in bond, and he could not see why it should not be allowed.

Mr. W. SCOTT said that the honourable members for Burke, Stanley, and West Moreton, of course, could not be interested in Ipswich, as they represented constituencies quite apart from it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER would promise if, on consultation with the Collector of Customs, he found that the establishment at Ipswich could be more economically conducted, to reduce the expense. There must be a competent staff of officers at any place where a customs establishment was formed while they had *ad valorem* duties, which necessitated the examination of goods. He could not promise the establishment of inland bonds, such as the honourable member for Brisbane proposed, for the population of this colony was small as compared with New South Wales, and there was not the same necessity for them.

Mr. FOOTE was glad the committee were in such an economical mood, and disposed to cut down all expenses; but he objected to all of them making an attempt to cut out one particular vote at any cost to the inhabitants of the town concerned. The honourable member for Toowoomba had spoken of the traffic from Ipswich when it was called the head of navigation, before the railway was opened; but he could assure them that it was even greater now. He was quite sure that the people of Toowoomba, if they had known the advantage of a bonded store, would have had one some time ago. There was enterprise enough in the town. As for the charges made against the conduct of the railway by Government, he thought that it had been made for the convenience of the public, and not for the purpose of competing with private trade. He had always objected to this manner of conducting the railway; and he did not see why fares should be fixed so low as to cause private traders to sell their steamers. There was no use in further debate, and he would prefer to let the question go at once to a vote. He would like to cut out all useless expenditure, and if that were done he thought the amount for Bundaberg ought to go. The honourable member for Mulgrave had spoken of certain honourable members being interested. He should like to know why they should have spoken if they were not interested? It would be a very foolish thing for an honourable member to vote against his own interest, and he, for one, would not do so.

Mr. STEVENSON said that the discussion seemed to be a fight between Brisbane and Ipswich, and he would like to have some reliable information on the subject. He saw the Collector of Customs in the gallery, and, in order to get the required information, he would move that he be called to the bar of the House.

The CHAIRMAN said that the committee of the House did not enjoy the privilege

of being able to call a member of the Upper House before them to the bar.

Mr. PALMER: Another anomaly!

Mr. STEVENSON said that the circumstance showed how very inconvenient it was for officers of the Civil service to be members of the Upper House.

Mr. TYREL would suggest, as a remedy for the difference of opinion, that the custom-house be left as established in Ipswich till the railway was extended to the border, and then it might be moved there with benefit to the country. At present, business men sending goods across that had paid duty in Brisbane had to wait a very long time for their drawback.

Mr. BELL would like to know if the Colonial Treasurer had altered his opinion about the expediency of establishing bonds in inland towns. Although he sympathized with Ipswich, it was an anomaly that it should be the only town favoured. He did not think it would be impossible to establish inland bonds, although he was not thoroughly informed as to details. He regretted that the Collector of Customs could not be examined, but perhaps the Colonial Treasurer could give the information.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he had made inquiries from the Collector of Customs, and had not been encouraged by the information received from him to give any pledge for establishing inland bonds. It was not possible, with their tariff, to conduct such establishments without an efficient staff, and he had not heard of any generally-expressed wish that they should be created. The special reason for retaining the establishment at Ipswich was that it was in existence and had not to be formed. When the population of the colony was larger the general question might be reconsidered.

Mr. BELL said that the Government establishments of Queensland were on a scale which, judged by Imperial ideas, was out of all proportion to the population, but they found that the colony had progressed satisfactorily in spite of the disparity. That, therefore, was no argument for delay. It was not a question of population,—it was a question whether it would be advantageous to establish economical bonds in the inland towns. He hoped this matter would not be considered on a basis of population, for if they took that view always the colony would never progress, and no improvements would be made. If the Treasurer could not bring forward any stronger argument he would lose his vote.

Mr. STEWART said there would be no difficulty in dealing with goods subject to *ad valorem* duty at inland bonds; the necessary examinations could easily be made by experts, at a salary of a few guineas per month. The expense of these establishments would be only a small item altogether.

If this could be done in New South Wales with dutiable goods, there should be no difficulty in carrying it out in Queensland. He admitted that any proposals of the kind ought to emanate from the people themselves, and that if they did not do so the Government ought not to move in the matter; but where districts expressly desired to have a bonded store Government would be justified in carrying out those wishes.

Mr. PALMER did not think that the statement of the Colonial Treasurer as to the views of the Collector of Customs on this question was exactly correct. His opinion was that the Collector of Customs was very much opposed to this custom-house at Ipswich, unless he had looked through the Government spectacles and altered his opinion. If that gentleman could be called to the bar of the House, he would give a very different opinion indeed; but as he was in the very happy position of being a Civil servant and a member of the Upper Chamber at the same time, the committee had no control over him, and must go without his opinion—unless they could get it dribbled thorough the Colonial Treasurer. Granted that the custom-house was of service to the people of Ipswich, who had been accustomed to it for some time, what he wanted to know was, could it not be carried on at much less expense? What was wanted with a sub-collector of customs? He had no hesitation in saying that the salary was voted for the individual and not for the office, for any ordinary clerk in the custom-house was just as capable of doing the work as that gentleman with his £400 a-year. If the establishment was a new one he should object to it *in toto*, and even now he objected to its being carried on at just double the expense necessary. He was not present at the time last night, but he had been given to understand that the Minister for Works explained the principle on which goods were taken by railway under bond. That honourable gentleman, he was told, described minutely how these goods were put in the vans and carefully sealed; but it had been discovered this morning that such a thing had never occurred—that the traffic manager knew nothing about any goods having been sent by rail in bond—and that no regulations concerning such goods were ever made. It was not to be expected that the committee would pass a vote in silence after such a statement. The Colonial Treasurer's statement of a similar kind was also false; but he did not charge him with falsehood, for he, no doubt, got the information from the Minister for Works, who was in a position in which he ought to know. He should like an explanation on this point from the Minister for Works. He would not entirely abolish the custom-house at Ipswich, as it was there; but there was no

need for a sub-collector and staff, and the expenses must be even more than was shown on the estimate, as nothing was allowed for labour and cartage. In fact, the establishment, on its present basis, seemed to be a downright absurdity.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he made no such statement last night on this subject. He merely said, *sotto voce*, that bonded goods could be carried by railway, under seal; not that they did go.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works spoke at least two minutes, explaining minutely how bonded goods were sent by rail, and describing how the seal was put on.

Mr. IVORY said the Minister for Works had stated that bonded goods could go by railway; but it appeared from the traffic manager that they could not, and that no arrangements whatever had been made with the traffic manager to facilitate the transport of goods in bond.

Mr. FOOTB, in reply to the honourable member for Port Curtis, said there were no charges for labour or cartage at Ipswich, those charges being paid by the person to whom the goods belonged and not by the Government.

Mr. BELL wished to be informed, through the Colonial Treasurer, whether in case his constituency of Dalby were to lay before the Government a reasonable and economical scheme for the erection of a customs department in that town, would the Government grant it? He asked this question in order to test the sincerity of the Government in their expressed desire to assist the inland towns to the same facilities as were now enjoyed by Ipswich.

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied, that if such a proposition were submitted to him he would give it his fullest consideration, and if it could be shown that the establishment of a custom-house would involve no probable loss of revenue or injury to trade, he should submit the scheme to his colleagues, with whom the decision would rest. In reply to the honourable member for Port Curtis, he might say that the total expense of the establishment at Ipswich was that set down in the Estimates—namely, £820, less £120 from bond rent alone last year. The sub-collector, it must be borne in mind, was one of the oldest officers in the Government service. After the expression of opinion which had been given, he should consult with the Collector of Customs in what manner the expenses connected with this branch of the department might be reduced.

Mr. Low suggested the desirableness of erecting bonded stores at St. George and Roma, where they were very much needed.

Question—That the estimate be reduced by £420—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 19.

Messrs. Palmer, Walsh, McIlwraith, McLean, W. Scott, Morehead, Stevenson, Macrossan, J. Scott, Buzacott, Graham, Fox, Low, Groom, King, Ivory, Perkins, Tyrel, and Bailey.

NOES, 16.

Messrs. Griffith, Dickson, Douglas, Beattie, O'Sullivan, Miles, Pettigrew, Fraser, Foote, J. Thorn, Grimes, Hockings, Stewart, Bell, G. Thorn, and Kingsford.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the sum of £1,771 be granted for the customs establishment at Maryborough. In submitting this vote to the committee he would point out the increases which it had been deemed advisable to set down. The first was an increase of £50 to the salary of the sub-collector, who was one of the oldest officers in the Government service. He was opposed, as a rule, to giving increases to officers receiving large salaries, but he had been induced by special reasons to ask for the increase to the salary of Mr. Sheridan. From 1862 to 1865 Mr. Sheridan discharged the duties of sub-collector of customs at Maryborough, for which he received £400; of harbour-master, for which he received £100; and immigration agent, for which he received £50;—making a total of £550 a-year. In 1865 these offices were amalgamated, but he continued to receive the same amount of salary. In the general reduction of salaries which took place in 1867 Mr. Sheridan's salary was reduced to £500, which amount he had been to the present time receiving. When times improved, and salaries were again restored to their former position, Mr. Sheridan did not benefit from that restoration, and his salary had remained since 1867 at £500 a-year. This year, on the representation that his duties were very heavy, and that he had to visit five lighthouses in the harbour, extending over a distance of 130 miles, from Wide Bay bar to Lady Elliott Island, that he was also shipping inspector, water police magistrate, paymaster and gold-receiver, besides having to perform his duties as sub-collector of customs, he had deemed it proper to place this £50 increase before the committee for their sanction. There was also an increase given to the second officer of customs, who had been in that office since 1867, and who had been highly reported upon by the head of the department. The salary of the clerk and landing-waiter was raised from £180 to £200, and £15 was proposed to be given to one of the junior clerks who had been five years in the office, and £25 extra to another junior clerk. The total increase on this estimate amounted to £135; and he had been induced to make it because it

1877—3 L

could not be expected that men could be obtained capable of performing such important duties unless they received sufficient to live upon.

Mr. STEVENSON said the Colonial Treasurer had tried to lead the committee off the track by his defence of the sub-collector at Maryborough; but they had certain correspondence before them which would remind honourable members that the reasons given were not the only reasons for the increase asked for. He thought this department in Maryborough seemed to be a very highly-paid one altogether. Comparing it with other establishments of quite as much importance, the increase was far beyond anything given at any other port. It would be admitted that Rockhampton was quite as important a place as Maryborough; but the increase given in this department at Rockhampton only amounted to £30, as against £135 at Maryborough. The particular question before the committee was discussed last year; and a very decided vote was given adverse to an increase to the salary of Mr. Sheridan; but immediately afterwards certain action was taken by the Executive which he considered was an insult to the committee, and led him to believe that it was no use bringing down Estimates to this House at all. Although the committee passed an adverse vote, yet a month or two afterwards the Executive gave £100 to Mr. Sheridan on account, as stated in the correspondence on this subject, of the high appreciation of his long and most efficient administration in the capacity of inspector of Polynesians for the Maryborough district. That memorandum, which was laid before the Government, was false on the face of it, for Mr. Sheridan's services as Polynesian inspector were not by any means long. At the Polynesian Committee, the question was asked of Mr. Sheridan, "How long have you held the office of Polynesian agent?" And he replied, "Since about the middle of November last." That was a period of only nine or ten months, and Mr. Sheridan sent in his resignation in March; so that the whole length of his services in that department was simply a period of sixteen months, and that could not be called a long service. With regard to the efficiency of Mr. Sheridan's services as Polynesian inspector, he for one—and he had a good deal to do with it as a member of the Polynesian Committee—failed to see the efficiency. If it consisted in pandering to a Ministry who were pandering to public opinion, and who induced Mr. Sheridan to cause a sensation to be made over the Polynesian question, with a view of making political capital out of it, then that gentleman had been a very efficient officer. But something different was required from an officer in Mr. Sheridan's position. That sensation referred to was entirely uncalled

for, as it had been found since that Mr. Sheridan's report with regard to the Polynesian question was unfounded. He hoped there would be a very decided expression of opinion against this increase of £50 to the salary of Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. PETTIGREW wished to ask the Colonial Treasurer, after the result of the previous division, what he intended to do with respect to the custom-house at Ipswich?

The CHAIRMAN reminded the honourable member that the question having been settled, it could not be now reopened.

Mr. PETTIGREW did not wish to reopen the question. He was simply speaking in illustration of the matter under discussion. It seemed to be an extraordinary proceeding on the part of the committee to sweep a custom-house from the map of the colony. And he should like to know if the Treasurer intended to carry on the custom-house at Ipswich on the reduced amount voted. He was quite prepared to accept the vote, and he did not think the efficiency of the department would lose much by it; But if they could do without a sub-collector at Ipswich, was there any occasion for a sub-collector, a secretary, and a second sub-collector, at Maryborough? It struck him that what was good for one place ought to be perfectly good for the other. He noticed that an advance of £25 was asked for on behalf of the second officer; but the total emoluments of that gentleman were already £375, or within £25 of the salary of the Ipswich sub-collector; and he had no doubt that he had a house as well. He did not intend to vote for one sixpence of increase in connection with the customs department at Maryborough. If there was any clipping to be done he was quite prepared to go in for it, as he believed that the whole of the work of that department could be done quite as efficiently for one-half the money. As regarded the merits of the Polynesian inspector, ever since he had been in that House the name of Mr. Sheridan had turned up as being a most efficient officer; even the honourable member for Warrego had praised him, and said that he was not only the most efficient officer in this colony, but anywhere else. Those were the days, however, when Mr. Sheridan used to do a little electioneering for the honourable member; but times had changed, and the honourable member was not now so loud in his praises of him. He wished to know from the Colonial Treasurer whether he intended to carry on the customs at Ipswich for another twelve months, or how the £410 voted was to be spent?

Mr. FOOTE wished to ask the Treasurer what was the amount of customs revenue collected at Maryborough during the past year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that nearly £29,000 was collected, and £5,000 from excise, making altogether £34,000. In regard to the remarks concerning the second officer and a subordinate clerk, he would point out to the committee that it was far cheaper in the long run for the country to give a fair salary to one or two good officers than to cut down their salaries and to distribute them over a lot of men who were perhaps incompetent. The increases put down had been placed on the Estimates on the strongest recommendation of the head of the department, not only as a reward for length of service, but for the very careful manner in which the officers had performed their duties. He did not think that the increase of £25 to the second officer, who had been for a great many years in the service, was anything more than a proper recognition of his services. He might mention that the second officer at Rockhampton had been inadvertently omitted for an increase. With regard to the question as to how he should accept the decision of the committee in reference to the last vote, he might say that it required some consideration.

Mr. J. SCOTT wished to ask for an explanation of the foot-note "B." Was any salary attached to it?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that there was no salary attached to it. If the honourable member would turn to the harbour-masters' salaries he would see by a foot-note that those duties were performed by sub-collectors. The foot-note was inserted merely for the purpose of showing the number of officers. He could assure the honourable member that the full amount of salary received by the sub-collector at Maryborough at the present time was £500.

Mr. PETTIGREW moved that the vote be reduced by the sum of £135, which was taking off all the increases proposed. The fact was that if they took it on the Ipswich principle it cost about 200 per cent. more to collect the revenue at Maryborough than it did at Ipswich.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was not aware that the Ipswich vote was really disposed of. An amendment was carried that the sum should be reduced by one-half, but nothing had been done with the other half. It would be as well to decide whether it was for the department for six months, or, if not, how it was to be spent.

Mr. IVORY agreed with the last speaker, that the question had not been decided, and he thought it was desirable to know how the £410 was to be disposed of.

Mr. WALSH did not think there was any occasion for doing such a thing, as he presumed the amendment of the honourable member for Toowoomba was that the customs department at Ipswich should terminate in six months. His object in rising,

however, was to remark that honourable members were not making an attack on the vote itself, and that more bad temper and feeling than statesmanship were displayed in discussing the matter.

Mr. PALMER was of the same opinion as the honourable member for Burke, that the other half of the vote for Ipswich was not disposed of; if it was, all he could say was that he had not voted with the idea of doing away with the Ipswich custom-house, but only to reduce the expenses.

Mr. FOOTE said that what the honourable member for Burke had stated was perfectly right. When they looked at the very large staff employed at Maryborough, and the amount collected during the year, he thought that, instead of the Treasurer coming down with increases, he should have proposed a reduction. If a sub-collector was wanted, there certainly should not be any duty for a second officer at the salary of £350. He was convinced that the sub-collector was quite capable of performing the duties of that office without any extra fatigue beyond that of ordinary men of business. He should support the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN said he would ask the Colonial Treasurer to withdraw the vote for the present, as he found that the last vote was reduced by £410, but that no decision was arrived at with regard to the balance. He would also ask the honourable member for Stanley to withdraw his amendment for the present.

Motions withdrawn accordingly.

Question—That £410 be voted for customs at Ipswich—put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in renewing his motion for £1,771 for customs at Maryborough, said that he must particularly call the attention of the committee to the increase proposed to the junior clerks' salaries, and to the advisability of its being retained, as it would be impossible to get competent persons to perform the duties unless those small increases were allowed. It had been represented to him that one of the junior clerks was a most competent man, and that he had received overtures to leave the service and to go into a bank.

Mr. PETTIGREW moved that the items be taken *seriatim*.

Mr. WALSH said that from what had fallen from the Colonial Treasurer, and his desire to have the junior clerks' salaries increased, and also the particular stress he laid upon it, it was evident the Government were not going to insist upon the addition to the salary of the sub-collector.

The COLONIAL TREASURER understood that the honourable member for Stanley had introduced an amendment for the reduction of the vote by £135, which would have included the proposed increase to the junior clerks; and he trusted that the committee

would, as a matter of justice, particularly consider the application he had made on behalf of those officers.

Mr. PALMER did not think that the increases proposed were at all satisfactory, as the revenue derived from Maryborough was not so very much more than at Ipswich. The Colonial Treasurer had told the committee that the duties collected at that place amounted to £17,000; whilst at Maryborough they only amounted to £29,000; so that the expenses were out of all proportion, and he hoped they would be cut down. Looking at the whole list of customs, he found that Maryborough was the only place where increases were proposed. At Bundaberg there certainly was a small increase put down, but Port Curtis was left just the same. If honourable members would turn to the Colonial Secretary's estimates, they would see that the sub-collector at that place was also police magistrate, for which he received no salary, and yet he was left at £350 a-year, although he was a very old officer, and had, in addition to his ordinary duties, sometimes to do duty on the goldfields. But wherever the Government could get a tool to meet their views, they put on an extra £50, and if that was refused by the committee, they dipped into a special fund, which they had no right whatever to do, and gave him £100. The Government, in fact, had, in the case of Mr. Sheridan, bought him for £100 to write that infamous report on Polynesian labour. He would point out that the minute which had been referred to was a lie on the face of it, as Mr. Sheridan was not inspector of Polynesians for a very long time, or for many years, but only for sixteen months; yet that £100 gratuity was put before the country as a reward for that officer's long services as inspector of Polynesians. He considered that the report written by that gentleman proved that his services were not worth the paper on which the cheque for £100 was written. It was too bad for the Government, after having robbed a special fund of £100, to come down and ask the committee to vote an extra £50 to the salary of Mr. Sheridan for doing less work than he had done before. Then, as a blind, honourable members were asked to vote small increases to all the other officers in that gentleman's department. Why, he would ask, were not increases put down for other places equally important? He would ask, what was the revenue from Rockhampton?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: £65,000.

Mr. PALMER said that there was a larger staff, or at any rate larger salaries, to collect £29,000 at Maryborough than to collect that £65,000 at Rockhampton. He thought the Treasurer should be ashamed of his Estimates and withdraw them. Looking further on, where really increases might with reason have been asked for, the cost

of living being notoriously higher than at Maryborough, he found that no increases were put down, except a few small sums. Even at the Endeavour River, where the cost of living was enormous, the salary of the sub-collector was put down at only £450. What, he would ask, was the customs revenue there?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: £70,000.

Mr. PALMER said it was high time that Mr. Sheridan should be removed from Maryborough and sent to the North, to the Chinese, to see if he could not kick up a row with them.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the honourable member for Port Curtis had represented that the whole of the different departments in the Northern districts were entirely ignored in the matter of increases. He must distinctly deny that such was the case; there was not the slightest foundation for the statement. Although no considerable increases were shown for any of the Northern ports, with the exception of Cooktown, yet there had been several changes there, by which officers had received increases by being promoted from subordinate positions. This being so, he did not see his way to recommending further increases. This was particularly the case with regard to the second officer at Townsville, who, by reason of his promotion, received an increase of from £60 to £75 during the past twelve months. The officer at Trinity Bay had not been put down for an increase, having been recently promoted from Townsville. At Rockhampton one officer had been promoted from £180 to £220 per annum. He was glad that a resolution had been moved that the items should be taken *seriatim*, and hoped it would be carried. He might take the opportunity of saying that he took upon himself the entire responsibility of asking for the four increases set down for Maryborough, and he could candidly recommend all of them to the committee.

Mr. Fox would like to direct the Colonial Treasurer's attention to the contrast between the salary and duties of the officer at Maryborough and the customs officer at Bundaberg. In the case of the Maryborough officer the Government relieved him of a portion of his duties and increased his pay. In the case of the Bundaberg officer, they increased his duties and reduced his pay.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. Fox said that the Bundaberg officer was formerly lands commissioner, with an additional salary of £50 per annum. This duty and the salary were taken from him; and it was intimated to him that he must also perform the duties of clerk of petty sessions.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He gets £50 additional for that.

Mr. Fox was very glad to receive the explanation. He would like to call the attention of the committee to the difference in the revenue received from Rockhampton and from Trinity Bay, which was nearly double that received from Maryborough; and to the difference in the salaries of the customs officers. At Maryborough the salaries of the customs department were £237 more than for Rockhampton, and £706 more than for Trinity Bay. Considering that it was more expensive to live at Rockhampton and Trinity Bay, he certainly thought that the duties at Maryborough should be done for £706 less than they at present cost. Maryborough seemed to be a specially favoured place, and it also seemed that the sub-collector of customs there made political capital out of his position, and had been made use of by this and previous Governments; but, like the man who wished to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, he was now likely to come to grief. After the expression of opinion which had already been given by the House on the action said to have been taken with regard to telegrams, he considered that the committee should, by reducing his salary, show their disapproval of the conduct of any Civil servant of the colony who interfered in politics. If a Civil servant chose to interfere in politics the committee should reduce his salary as a punishment and an example. If he (Mr. Fox) had said anything against the sub-collector of customs which was not correct he should be very happy to make amends; but he did not think he had made any incorrect statements, as he had made careful inquiries as to that officer's past conduct.

Mr. STEVENSON said that the Colonial Treasurer had tried to show that he had not unduly favoured Maryborough, and that the Northern officers did not appear for increases upon the Estimates because they had not been so long a time in the service, and because they had received increases by promotion. In reply to this, he would draw the Colonial Treasurer's attention to the salaries which the second officer and landing-waiter for Rockhampton and Maryborough got. It was proposed to increase the Maryborough officer's salary by £25, which would bring it to £350; he was also shipping-master at £25, making his total salary £375; whereas the salary of the Rockhampton officer was only £325.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He is also shipping-master at the same salary.

Mr. STEVENSON said the Colonial Treasurer had taken his stand on the ground that the Northern officers had not been so long in the service. He would then ask, was it not a fact that the second officer at Rockhampton had been fifteen years in the service?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he believed the second officer at Rockhampton had been a very long time in the service, and that his claims for an increase were fully as strong as any second officer in the colony. If the honourable member had waited until the committee came to the Rockhampton estimate, he would have heard him announce that it was intended to place an additional £25 upon the Supplementary Estimates for the second officer. The increase was inadvertently omitted, but he had already privately intimated to the honourable member for Rockhampton what he had intended to do in the matter.

Mr. WALSH said, perhaps the Colonial Treasurer would also state that he had inadvertently omitted to place on the Supplementary Estimates an increase for the sub-collector and police magistrate at Gladstone, who was also an old officer and only received £350 per annum for the two positions. He filled two onerous and responsible offices, but did not get more than the second officer at Maryborough, who had no onerous duties to perform. He would remind the committee that a considerable export trade was done at Gladstone, and that it was almost the only port which had a foreign trade; yet the gentleman he had named only received £350 a-year. There was surely some injustice being done in this instance.

Mr. MOREHEAD wanted to point out, from the statement just made by the Colonial Treasurer, that this was simply a fishing estimate, for he held out that if the committee voted the Maryborough salaries an increase would be brought forward on the Supplementary Estimates for other officers. It was more than absurd that the Colonial Treasurer should reply in this way to the first objection raised by an honourable member on the Opposition benches. He should like to know how many other officers he intended to provide for on the Supplementary Estimates if this fishing estimate were carried. Why should the sub-collector of customs at Maryborough, which was a port second to three others, be signalled out for an increase of salary? He could tell the committee why, and the Premier could tell them why; it was because he was a political agent of the Premier—because he had done more electioneering for the Premier than any other man. The officer in question had been shown up in his true colours, and had been already bribed to the extent of £100, taken from a vote which the Government had no right to touch. The committee were being asked to subsidize the political agent of the Premier; but it should not sanction such corruption. The country ought not to be asked to pay this most notorious political agent. He believed that that officer was not only a political agent of the Premier, but that he had been

of other Ministers, which made it worse, for it showed the utter corruption of the individual whom the committee were now being asked to subsidize. It showed that he could not be true, even to one party. He well recollected when Mr. Sheridan went personally round to the members of the House trying to get his salary raised by parading his services, and complaining that he was a most deserving officer who was badly treated. It was a disgrace to the colony that such a man should be in the Civil service. He went that far, although it was further than any member of the committee had gone. He also asserted that for political purposes Mr. Sheridan was induced to write a report on Kanaka labour. He wished honourable gentlemen would remember the circumstances accompanying the writing of that report. At the time there was a great feeling got up against Kanaka labour; exciting articles appeared in the leading journal, rightly or wrongly attributed to the Premier. This agitation was followed by the production of this report, and a cry was raised for the abolition of Polynesian labour. But the Government evidently disbelieved the report of this champion of the anti-Kanaka party; they thought it better to give him £100 to clear out of his office, and to pass an Executive minute complimenting him on the manner in which he had discharged his arduous duties of Polynesian inspector during a lengthy service of one year and four months. He (Mr. Morehead) had pointed out last year, when it was pleaded as a reason for an increase to him that Mr. Sheridan held so many offices, that the best way of adjusting matters would be to relieve him of some of them and not increase his salary. He found that the Government had relieved him of one office, but had not followed the rest of his advice, for they proposed to increase his salary also. No case had been made out for the proposed increase. If Mr. Sheridan was so valuable an officer he should be sent to Cooktown, where there was a large revenue and difficult work to do. It was perfectly well known that no trouble or bother arose in Maryborough but Mr. Sheridan was at the bottom of it. He (Mr. Morehead) believed that he was now entitled to a considerable retiring pension; and it would, perhaps, be better for him, and certainly more conducive to the efficiency of the public service, if he would take his right in this respect and retire. He (Mr. Morehead) was determined to oppose this vote so long as he could find an honourable member of the committee to assist him.

The PREMIER said that if he had not known that the most prominent characteristic of the honourable gentleman who had just sat down was a love of pure mischief, he should be inclined to attribute the last speech to a vindictive and malicious

nature. As it was, he would charitably attribute it to mischievousness; but in the case of another man, he would have taken it for an outburst of malice and vindictiveness. The honourable member had told them that because Mr Sheridan had done his duty he was to be hounded out of the public service.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I rise to a point of order. The Premier should have a misinterpretation clause attached to his speeches.

The PREMIER said that whatever were the words the honourable gentleman used, they were tantamount to the assertion that Mr. Sheridan should be hounded out of the public service; and this was said of a man who had served the country for thirty or forty years—before, probably, the honourable gentleman was born. This man, who had stood the test of time, who had done his duty faithfully and honestly for so many years, was to be branded as a political agitator in his (Mr. Douglas's) service. It was insinuated that he was endeavouring to pay for political services rendered by Mr. Sheridan to himself, out of the public funds, and he was told that he should pay for them out of his own private funds. Mr. Sheridan had faithfully done his public duty in every possible respect, but he had never done any political service for him. He would give the assertion, in every shape and form, his most unqualified denial. He hoped the honourable gentleman had not known that the assertion was untrue when he made it, although it seemed very much as if he did. He hoped so; for, if not, then he would be compelled to adopt a lower estimate of his (Mr. Morehead's) character than he had already formed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Sheridan was rather opposed to himself in political matters, and his political influence, if he had exerted it, would not have been in his favour. And if he had on former occasions exerted a political influence, in what way was he to be blamed for doing so? He denied that Civil servants had no right to hold political opinions, or that they were to be mere cyphers. Mr. Sheridan, he was sure, had done his duty as Polynesian inspector, thoroughly and efficiently. It was from the necessity he felt of doing his duty thoroughly in a difficult position that these accusations were brought against him. He had to do unpopular work, to assert the law against many evils that had arisen; and it was because he did that duty so effectually—did what few men would have done so well—that he was now assailed, and exposed to a shameful attack by a man every way his inferior. Being a public servant who had done his duty, he was branded as a political agitator, as untrue to his trust, and as having fastened on the party opposite the unpopularity attached

to the Polynesian question. It had been cited as a proof of unfairness that the Executive minute referred to Mr. Sheridan's long service. He had been long in the Government service, and had done as much service to the country as any man in the public employment. In intimating to Mr. Sheridan that he was relieved from his office of Polynesian inspector he (the Premier) had used his own words, and this was what he said:—

“The Government have felt it necessary to appoint an inspector of Polynesians, who can devote the whole of his time to the duties connected with the office. Mr. Horrocks, of the Immigration Office, Brisbane, has been appointed. In making this intimation to you, I am anxious to express to you the high sense the Government have of your services as Polynesian inspector. They believe that you have discharged your duties with exemplary assiduity, and they propose, in the meantime, to authorize to you a payment of £100 in recognition of your services. This will not interfere with the contemplated increase of your salary in the Estimates.”

That was the statement on which the Executive minute was founded, and it exactly expressed what he (Mr. Douglas) intended to say. The duties Mr. Sheridan had performed were excessive—more in fact than he could perform. While the Government had at their disposal a fund for the payment of agents and other officers employed in connection with the Polynesian traffic, they had complete power to devote part of it to rewarding an officer who had done his duty so effectually, and were thoroughly justified in doing so. Mr. Sheridan deserved a great deal more than had been granted to him; and a great injustice had been done to him in not having received an increase before. The present salary which it was proposed to vote him was merely a return to the amount from which it had been reduced ten years ago, and this man had been thirty years in the public service. It was better to redress this injustice late than never; but there would not be a full recompense made unless the arrears of the long series of years was made up to him. He hoped that the amount would be voted, and without any very long delay.

Mr. IVORY said that they had heard the praises of Mr. Sheridan sung at great length, but he had a different tale to tell of him. He (Mr. Ivory) believed that the cat-and-dog character that Maryborough had long borne in the colony arose entirely from Mr. Sheridan being in the town. He had interfered where he had no business to interfere; he had meddled openly in politics. The Premier had admitted this.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. IVORY said that the Premier implied it. He (Mr. Ivory) would try and show

to honourable members of the committee Mr. Sheridan in quite a different character from that given of him by the Premier. Honourable members knew the position he had taken up respecting the Kanaka question, when he penned the report of which they had all heard. They knew that the report was only produced because some honourable members had called for the production of papers. A committee was appointed to inquire into the truth of the allegations, and all but one member of it had agreed that Mr. Sheridan had acted a most disingenuous part, and had brought accusations which he was not prepared to substantiate. He (Mr. Ivory) had been present in the committee-room when, in answer to the honourable member for Wide Bay, Mr. Sheridan had stated what was false. The Immigration Agent, as could be seen by papers already produced, had accused the same gentleman of falsehood. Had this been inquired into? Other papers laid on the table that day showed that the same gentleman had acted in a very underhand manner. The reason that these papers had not been laid on the table sooner, he believed, was because, when Mr. Sheridan had been called on to produce them, he said he would bring them down to town himself, which he failed to do. They now knew his object for appearing in town lately. He had tried very hard to prevent certain papers from being produced, and it was only on his return to Maryborough that they were forwarded. He (Mr. Ivory) stated what he had heard; the information might or might not be correct. Mr. Sheridan had always tried to put people connected with his own department in the wrong. It was a system he constantly pursued; and so jealous was he, that whenever another gentleman was put into a position of credit in the town he always tried to hound him out—and had too often succeeded. As honourable members had not seen the papers laid on the table of the House that day, he would make the committee aware of the character of the documents. The first one was dated 17th March, from the Immigration Office, and contained a recommendation that Captain Smith should no longer be employed as captain of a labour vessel. This was from Mr. Horrocks. The next one was from Mr. Sheridan, and it referred to Mr. Kirby's log. The letter said that the first entry in the log referred to a Polynesian boy who was put on board the "Sybil" and subsequently ran away, and it went on to say that if the boy was not sent back he would prosecute Captain Taylor. The writer, referring to the improper language used by Captain Smith, said that an apology had been made and accepted. The row, he went on, was trumpety throughout. That was what Mr. Sheridan thought; but it appeared it was sufficient to prevent the

captain from ever obtaining the command of a labour vessel again. He persisted in throwing all the blame on Mr. Kirby, the Government agent, for he went on to say that the quarrel arose from his unwise conduct in forcing his small knowledge of navigation on the attention of the captain, and that, in his opinion, such conduct was not calculated to promote harmony and discipline on board. What sort of letter was that to write? Mr. Sheridan, when he read it, had the log before him, and the disgraceful records it contained. In place of taking Mr. Kirby's part, as the Colonial Secretary subsequently did, he took the captain's side, and attempted to damage the former gentleman. Further on a little, the writer referred to Mr. Kirby's flat contradiction of himself, and his refusal to communicate with the head of the department through him. That was evidently the grievance; that was what everyone who knew Mr. Sheridan would understand to be the sting of the whole thing. He (Mr. Ivory) would now come to the log which described the quarrel between the captain and agent. It showed that the captain did not keep his hold in proper order, and neglected a boy who had been hurt. It went on to show that in consequence of these representations, made by the agent, the captain assailed him with language which he did not care to repeat to honourable members. Yet, this was the log which Mr. Sheridan read, and then sat down and wrote to the Colonial Secretary justifying the captain. Subsequently, however, Mr. Sheridan found that Captain Smith was in hot water, and hastened to turn against him; for, in a subsequent letter, he found him saying that he had commenced a criminal prosecution against him, and recommended that he should never again be employed in a recruiting vessel. This was a turning of the tables with a vengeance in so immaculate a gentleman. If the Premier had known Mr. Sheridan so well as he (Mr. Ivory) did, he would not have been so lavish in his praise of him. He believed that it was owing to Mr. Sheridan's influence that these papers had been so long kept back. They had been kept back until the question of the salary was disposed of.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He had nothing to do with it.

Mr. IVORY said there was also a letter from Mr. Kirby, in which he utterly denied the allegation of Mr. Sheridan. This was the gentleman who had been so much belauded by the Premier, and of whose conduct they had had three or four instances this year. He thought the less they heard of that gentleman the better. And with regard to his proposed increase of salary, he thought Mr. Sheridan had been very well paid. Since he had been in this House that gentleman's claims for increase of salary had been brought forward ses-

sion after session, and one year he got paid for some slight expenditure he made about his own house. It struck him that Mr. Sheridan had a free house and quarters, and a very handsome garden. The Executive, when they made him a present of £100 last year, said in their memorandum—"Ministers are desirous of marking their high appreciation of the long and most efficient services of R. B. Sheridan, Esq." He thought he could recognize in that memorandum the "fine Roman hand" of the honourable member for Brisbane, and imagined that he could now see him writing it. He should like to know what Mr. Sheridan did in that capacity. He (Mr. Ivory) happened to be in possession of a considerable number of papers connected with that gentleman's duties as Polynesian inspector during that long period of sixteen months. They were certificates from owners of plantations in the Wide Bay district, who stated the number of times which those plantations had been visited by this very assiduous Polynesian inspector. From these documents he found that the following plantations had never been visited at all by Mr. Sheridan:—Jindah, Ramsay Brothers; Ivera, Michael Canny; Ferney, P. O. Kelly; Underwood, James M'Ilwraith; Mungar Saw Mills, Ramsay and Co.; Antigua, P. Richardson; Alpha, James Jameson; Elizabeth Farm, Charles A. Forster; Irrawarra, M. L. Lewis; Loudon, James Cran; Dingwell, Richard Webb; Alford, Farquhar and Dunn; Rosella, J. Rankin. He also found that the Dedham Farm was visited once, Charleville twice, and Yengarie twice. He should like some one on the opposite side to bring forward some facts to show that Mr. Sheridan had some justification in blowing his own trumpet. From Mr. Sheridan's report people were led to believe that he had visited all the plantations, and had taken pains to inquire into everything connected with these Polynesians; but it seemed, in point of fact, as evidenced by these certificates which he held in his hand, that that gentleman had visited very few indeed of the plantations; and yet he had been presented with £100 for his "long and most efficient services" as Polynesian inspector. The Premier had taken exception to the wording of the minute; but if £100 was not voted for Mr. Sheridan's "long and efficient services as Polynesian inspector," the Executive had no earthly business to take £100 from the Polynesian Suspense Fund and give it to him—especially as the committee of this House said last year that he should have no increase of salary. He hoped the committee were now a little better acquainted with this gentleman than they were before he rose to speak.

Mr. STEWART said the honourable member for Burnett had stated that he disco-

vered his (Mr. Stewart's) "fine Roman hand" in the memorandum. He assured that gentleman, however, that he was quite mistaken. The grant was not made while he was in office, and he never knew anything of it until afterwards. The honourable gentleman had read the names of several owners of plantations which the inspector never visited. One of those gentlemen was named Canny. He wished to know whether there was more than one owner of that name; for a witness named Canny was examined before the Polynesian Committee, and stated that the inspector had visited his plantation frequently.

Mr. BAILEY said there were two gentlemen of the same name in the district, and the one to which the honourable gentleman referred was not the same as the one whose name was mentioned by the honourable member for Burnett. One of the plantations mentioned by that honourable member was visited by Mr. Sheridan by deputy. He remembered finding a policeman there one day searching the premises without a search-warrant, and upon that occasion Mr. Sheridan gave certain information to a newspaper at Maryborough which proved to be false, and which cost that newspaper a libel action and something over £100. Mr. Sheridan was not at all badly paid for his services. He did not suppose he had more than twelve hours' work per week in connection with his office. He had also a comfortable house, and a nice garden that was kept in order at the expense of the country; besides which, he had a boat to go about in and two men to pull him. Mr. Sheridan was the general factotum of Maryborough. He had so little to do in his own department that his finger was in everybody's pie. He possessed great local political influence, and that was the reason why the attempt to increase his salary was made year after year. Last year when the question was on he did not vote on either side; but on the present occasion he should certainly vote against giving the increase, especially after the decision of the committee last year.

Mr. MOREHEAD rose to take exception to the language which the Premier had used about himself. The Premier said he believed Mr. Sheridan was a great deal a better man in every respect than he (Mr. Morehead) was. Whether that was so or not, the Premier had no right to get up and insult any honourable member of the House as he had insulted him, and he should not submit to it. He had not suborned witnesses, nor told lies, that he was aware of; but both those things had been proved against Mr. Sheridan; and he should insist, therefore, upon the Premier withdrawing the expression. As a member of this committee he had a perfect right to discuss the merits or demerits of any Civil servant. He was here in an equal position with the Premier, as far as representing a

constituency was concerned; and it was his duty to criticise every vote which he was asked to pass. Supposing he had compared the Premier with anyone else, or spoken about his private character, would such an action have been sustained by the committee? He sincerely hoped not. He took a serious exception to the manner in which the Premier had compared Mr. Sheridan to himself. Mr. Sheridan might be all that was good, right, and just, but he had his own opinion on the matter, and he had a perfect right to express it. He had no doubt that the Premier, on reflecting on what he had said, would do his duty and retract the remarks he had made, and express his sorrow at having set such a bad example to other members of the committee, if they chose to follow him. The Premier was evidently smarting under the attack made upon a friend of his own; but he had used language which he for one would not submit to, either in that House or out of it.

The PREMIER had no wish to hurt the feelings of the honourable member for Mitchell, but he thought that gentleman had expressed himself in very strong terms, and imputed to Mr. Sheridan actions which he (the Premier) knew to be untrue. Had Mr. Sheridan been a political agent of his it would have been dishonourable to that gentleman and disgraceful to himself. He knew that Mr. Sheridan was perfectly innocent of any such conduct; and he had never advocated his election at Maryborough, in any way, as far as he was aware. The intercourse between them was merely of a personal and friendly nature, entirely unconnected with politics. Probably he had spoken with some degree of warmth; but he had no intention of disparaging the honourable member for Mitchell beyond saying that he was sometimes very thoughtless, and extremely reckless in his statements. He did not wish to hurt the honourable gentleman's feelings, for he expressed himself at times in a manner which he (the Premier) could not approve of. He did not wish to compare the honourable member to Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was quite as able to give hard blows as to receive them. The Premier had no right to say of any member of the House that he was thoughtless and reckless. He did not think that his career in the House had been so thoughtless and reckless as that of the honourable gentleman; and he would not submit to be lectured by the Premier or anybody else. There was no maunliness in the apology offered by the Premier. Either he should defend his position or withdraw from it; but he was not manly enough, nor straightforward enough, nor honest enough to do so.

Mr. STEVENSON wished to correct a remark which had been made by the Premier. That honourable gentleman tried

to lead the committee to believe that the allusion in the minute to Mr. Sheridan's "long and most efficient services" meant his long services as an officer of the Government, and not as Polynesian inspector. But the words of the memorandum plainly showed that the "long and efficient services" referred to his duties as Polynesian inspector, and nothing else. After what had fallen from honourable members on the subject, and what he gathered from the attested certificates cited by the honourable member for Burnett, the only conclusion he could come to was, that Mr. Sheridan was a disgrace to the public service; and he hoped that honourable members would discountenance the Ministry in trying to force this vote upon them.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that since the days of Separation he had never heard so much abuse heaped upon any Civil servant as had been heaped to-night upon Mr. Sheridan. He had always taken this (Opposition) side of the House, because he believed that the members upon it generally showed high form, and were very gentlemanly; and he never thought that so much abuse could have come from honourable members on this side of the House. Every hard word in the English vocabulary had been hurled at Mr. Sheridan's head. There was one consolation for him and the public, that all who had attacked him that night were employers of Kanaka labour; if that was not the case, it was not a more extravagant assertion than had already been made that night; but still he intended to stick to the truth as close as he could. All who had spoken against Mr. Sheridan asserted that he had been a political agent; it had been stated, and, in fact, was spread all over the country, that that gentleman was a political agent of the honourable member for Warrego when he was member for Maryborough. Now that had been positively denied by that honourable member. The honourable member at the head of the Government had also positively denied that Mr. Sheridan was ever a political agent for him; so that assertions were made and not proved. The honourable member for Burnett had used a great deal of eloquence that evening, because his heart no doubt was in what he said; although, if the Kanakas were consulted, they would not agree with the statements made by the honourable member. The honourable member stated that he was in the committee-room at the time of the Polynesian Labour Inquiry, when Mr. Sheridan was examined; but he (Mr. O'Sullivan) was also in the room, and he had no hesitation in saying that Mr. Sheridan was intimidated in that room, and that the member of the committee intimidating him had to apologize for it. He believed the honourable member for Mulgrave was chairman, and

had to ask Mr. Amhurst to apologize to Mr. Sheridan for what he had said. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) had read Mr. Sheridan's report—which was, no doubt, a very strong one—and he had gone into the committee-room asking himself whether that gentleman would have the moral strength to maintain that report. He then saw that he was intimidated—although he would do the honourable member for Mulgrave the justice to say that he defended that gentleman. At any rate, Mr. Sheridan was bullied in the room, and he could not divest himself of the feeling that the committee was not an impartial one. Instead of maintaining his report, Mr. Sheridan made it a great deal stronger, and told him that he could have made it still stronger; and there was no doubt he told truth when he said that it was a system of slavery, for it was no better at the present time. Objection had been raised to giving that gentleman £100 for being inspector of Polynesians for sixteen months; but there was no objection to giving another gentleman £450 a-year for performing the same duties. He would ask, whether a gentleman who did his work well was not worth £100 for sixteen months, when another man was receiving £450 for the same duties. The fact was that the paltry £100 was begrudged to Mr. Sheridan, because, forsooth, he threw himself across a faction. Another complaint had been made that that gentleman's salary should not be increased by a paltry £50 a-year, because at the present time Rockhampton and Trinity Bay returned a larger customs revenue than Maryborough; but honourable members ought to take the customs revenue of those three provinces for the last fifteen years, and they would then see that the average would be in favour of Maryborough. Again, they had been asked to reduce the salary to £400 a-year—to reduce by £100 the salary of a gentleman who had been thirty-two years in the service of the country; whilst there was another Civil servant who started six months ago with £350 a-year, and they had been asked to increase his salary to £400. Mr. Sheridan was also in charge of a harbour 320 miles long, had a large number of men under his charge, and he believed that it was known all over Australia that Wide Bay was as well buoyed and attended to as any harbour in the Australian colonies. He was also collector of customs, police magistrate, paymaster of all the Civil servants, chairman of the immigration board—and, in fact, he had every position and every work thrown on his shoulders that could be imposed on a Civil servant; but because he had sent in a report on Polynesians, and had the courage to tell the truth, his salary was to be reduced. The honourable member for the Burnett had hawked it about, that Mr. Sheridan had come

down last week to influence the Government to withdraw some written reports he had sent in, before they appeared in print; but such a thing was absurd, and he was surprised that the honourable member should hawk into the House what he himself acknowledged was only hearsay. Still that hearsay evidence would go before the country as right-down truth; and, therefore, the truth should have been proved before the statement was hawked inside that House. As to the honourable member for Wide Bay, he might just as well have left the matter alone. Certainly the honourable member was not of much weight just now, and possibly whatever he said, though quite untrue, was only like the bite of a mosquito. That honourable member stated that Mr. Sheridan used political influence,—and that had been the great song all over the country, and had also been repeated by every speaker on the Opposition side of the committee; but he thought it would be a great comfort to Mr. Sheridan to know that not one particle of such a statement had been proved that evening. He should vote for the increase, as he thought it was only doing tardy justice to the gentleman in question. He thought that a gentleman who had to put up with all the abuse that Mr. Sheridan had to every year, when his salary was proposed, might just as well leave the service, as no doubt he could well afford to do. It was certainly a lesson to him (Mr. O'Sullivan) as a parent, that as long as he could find a loaf for his son he should never go into the Civil service, as he looked upon Civil servants as slaves. Before he sat down he would remark that he did not believe the language that had been used about Mr. Sheridan that evening would have been used to that gentleman outside that House; if it had been used to him (Mr. O'Sullivan) he should have answered it with a blow.

Mr. W. SCOTT said that the honourable member who had just spoken had made a great mistake. It was quite true that he was in the committee-room one day when Mr. Sheridan was being examined, and when he said that he had been intimidated by a member of the committee; but it had turned out that it was, after all, only some remark made to Mr. Sheridan outside the committee-room in a chaffing way. One reason why the committee were asked to increase Mr. Sheridan's salary was, that he had been so long in the service; but he considered that was no argument in favour of an increase, but rather the reverse, as there were lots of men coming from home who had much more ability than that gentleman. If promotion was to be made they should begin with the younger branches of the service—with men who were well qualified to hold Mr. Sheridan's office. He thought it was high time that that gen-

tleman should be removed from Maryborough, as he had almost ruined the sugar interest there. He had no doubt that that gentleman had got hold of the honourable member for North Brisbane, who was a member of the committee and a strong opponent of Polynesian labour, merely for political purposes, because he had so often turned his coat with various Governments that no doubt he would do so again.

Mr. PERKINS said he did not know Mr. Sheridan, but from the character given of him that evening it was quite evident he was not pliant enough to suit the opinions of some members of that committee and of the country outside. About ten days ago they were asking to increase the salaries of some members of the Civil service on the ground of their long service; yet in the present instance there was a gentleman who had been thirty-two years in the public service of this colony and New South Wales, and an objection was raised to mete out the same justice to him. Nothing had been proved against that gentleman, but all was mere hearsay. The whole sum and substance of the charge was that he had written a Polynesian report. Then again, a good deal had been said about his political agency; but that had been denied by the honourable member for Warrego, who certainly ought to know, having been connected with Maryborough for a great many years, and having represented it for some considerable time. The Premier had also denied the charge; and why then should it be repeated over and over again? Another honourable member took to reading a report of the schooner "Sybil," and statements made by the captain of it about Mr. Sheridan; but he would ask, what was the character of the men, or the value of their oaths, who went down to the Islands in search of black labour? He should certainly put the word of Mr. Sheridan, against whom not a charge had ever been made during thirty-two years, against the affidavit of the captain of a labour vessel. For that reason he thought that the honourable member for the Burnett need not have taken up the time of the committee by going into that voluminous report. There was another matter connected with the Polynesian question. He believed that at one period the honourable member for Port Curtis had the enterprise to embark in that labour business, and to send down to the South Sea Islands to get twenty-two Islanders; but afterwards, feeling a little ashamed of the transaction, he turned them over to a German overseer on the Beaufort station. That was only hearsay; but no more so than what had been said against Mr. Sheridan. As to the charges which had been made by the honourable member for Mitchell, who was continually talking about his own

character, he would draw attention to a remark made by that honourable member, that Mr. Sheridan deserved to be hounded out of the service. It was true the honourable member afterwards denied it; but having made such a charge he should not have run away from it. He believed that if Mr. Sheridan was a member of that House his accusers would not have quite so much to say. He thought it should be a warning to people with sons, that whilst there were no doubt many worthless men in the Civil service who ought to be drummed out of it, length of good service and ability were to be treated in the manner it had been that evening, and the character of a gentleman was to be dragged through the dirt every time his salary was brought before the committee. It certainly was no prospect to hold out to parents to get their sons into the Civil service. On the score that he had been induced to vote for increases to old and tried Civil servants a few evenings ago, he should vote for the increase now proposed.

Mr. BAILEY thought they had had the Kanaka red-herring pretty well trailed across their path during this useless debate. Mr. Sheridan, as Polynesian inspector, had already received an increase to his salary in the form of a gratuity of £100, but it was now proposed to increase his salary by £50 a-year. Surely a man who had denounced the Polynesian system deserved more than £50 a-year! Surely a man who had saved the country from the brand of slavery deserved more than £50; and, therefore, if they wanted to reward him, as a reward let them give him something handsome. As, however, the committee had so generally opposed any increase to that gentleman's salary last year he should oppose the increase now on the estimate.

Mr. STEWART said the honourable member for Mulgrave had insinuated that he had been got hold of by Mr. Sheridan for political purposes; but there had never been anything of the kind. He considered that such remarks were perfectly worthless, as they were made without the slightest notion whether they were true or not.

Mr. W. SCOTT, in reply to the honourable member for Brisbane, said he could assure the committee that that honourable gentleman acted in a very one-sided way on the inquiry. He came in as Mr. Sheridan's advocate—or, at all events, as a political advocate on the question.

Mr. STEWART could give that statement a positive denial. He went there to hear the evidence, not as an advocate; but he did think that Mr. Sheridan was perfectly right to take exception to the way in which he was examined. He was examined in a menacing way; and, so long as he (Mr. Stewart) was on any committee, he should object to witnesses being bullied in the manner that he was.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that so far from the honourable member for Mulgrave's accusation against the member for Brisbane being true, it was the honourable member himself who was the special pleader, and Mr. Sheridan was undoubtedly bullied.

Mr. WALSH said that last year an increase to the sub-collector at Maryborough was refused. Then, during the recess, a laudatory letter was written to him, commending his services as Polynesian inspector; and he was paid £100 from moneys that should not have been appropriated to such a purpose. That was one of the charges, and it was sufficient to make the committee pause before consenting to the increase. Next it was a question for the committee to take into consideration, whether this gentleman was not adequately paid already. In addition to his salary he had a fine house, and a fine garden, which could not be rented under £150 per annum; and, besides this, they were told that the garden was being attended to by a man in the public service. If this proposition was acceded to, Mr. Sheridan would be the recipient, by allowances and salary, of an income of £700 a-year. He would receive exactly the same as, or more than, the Collector of Customs. If the increase were allowed, and Mr. Sheridan's income was raised to £700 by salary and contingencies, then he maintained that the Collector of Customs was being grossly underpaid. He had for years, when Mr. Sheridan was his personal and political friend, resisted his applications for an increase, as he had always maintained that he had been sufficiently paid; and, for the same reason, he now maintained that the committee had no right to exalt Mr. Sheridan by emolument up to the position of the Collector of Customs. Mr. Sheridan was charged with certain offences; but he (Mr. Walsh) asserted that he was simply being made a scapegoat, owing to the action of the present Premier. It was rumoured that Mr. Sheridan became converted to be the friend of the Kanaka and the opponent of the employers of that kind of labour in this way—that at the time the Premier was visiting Maryborough he suggested to Mr. Sheridan that, owing to the attention he had given to the Kanaka question, he was a proper person to succeed Mr. Massie in the position of Under Secretary; hence he (Mr. Walsh) asserted, Mr. Sheridan's zeal was fired—at the instigation of the Premier it was alleged. If that was the case, and the Premier could not deny the rumour, then he (Mr. Walsh) said that nearly the whole of the opposition to Polynesian labour was due to the hope held out to Mr. Sheridan that he would succeed Mr. Massie. He put it in a plain way, so that the Premier could give him a decided answer.

The PREMIER said that, of course, whatever he might say would not satisfy the honourable member. He could assert this, however, that Mr. Sheridan's report was made to Mr. Hemmant long before he (Mr. Douglas) had any connection with the present or preceding Government. The report was addressed to Mr. Hemmant, and the rumour, to which the honourable gentleman had referred, was a pure *canard*.

Mr. WALSH asked whether the Premier, in one of his visits to Maryborough, instilled into Mr. Sheridan the hope that he would succeed Mr. Massie as Under Colonial Secretary? Did he not, in fact, recommend him to apply for Mr. Massie's place?

The PREMIER said he had expressed the opinion that Mr. Sheridan was perfectly entitled to look for that promotion, but he did not think that should be brought as an accusation against him. He was of opinion that, next to Mr. Thornton, Mr. Sheridan was the next in the Civil service who was fairly entitled to expect such promotion.

Mr. WALSH: Did the Premier incite Mr. Sheridan?

The PREMIER said he did not incite Mr. Sheridan to do anything of the kind, and he considered it very unfair of the honourable gentleman to lay such a result to his charge. He believed that Mr. Sheridan acted entirely independently of any advice that was given him. His report was made long before he (Mr. Douglas) had anything to do with the Government.

Mr. WALSH simply wanted a direct answer to the question—Whether the Premier did or did not recommend Mr. Sheridan to apply for the position of Under Colonial Secretary?

The PREMIER said that, even supposing such was the case, it did not follow that he was, therefore, not entitled to his reward. It was unfair to Mr. Sheridan to make these inferences. Surely Mr. Sheridan was entitled to any promotion which might be open to him; and it was unjust to him to say that he was incited to do what plainly it was his duty to do. In connection with the Polynesian question, he did his duty, and very disagreeable duty it was. He had made enemies of men who had long been his friends, and who had now most unjustly deserted him.

Mr. WALSH remarked, that what he said was, that Mr. Sheridan was quickened in his animosity, or in his general vigilance—he would put it in that way—in consequence of the Premier's suggestion that he would be a fit man to succeed Mr. Massie, which position gave him particularly the oversight of the management of Polynesians.

The PREMIER said that on no occasion that he could recollect had he ever suggested anything at all to Mr. Sheridan in connection with the Kanaka question.

Mr. WALSH said that he enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Sheridan for a number of years, and so far as he knew, during the most violent political discussions which took place at Maryborough, he never saw that gentleman interfere, nor did he believe that Mr. Sheridan took any part in politics in any open manner. This assertion he made without the least reservation. He further said that during the violent political struggles which took place when he was connected with the Maryborough constituency, Mr. Sheridan, as a public officer, was a most valuable man in that constituency; for he did more than any other man to allay the ill-feeling and the animosity which arose out of those struggles. He recollected that on one particular occasion, when an allusion was made from the altar in his (Mr. Walsh's) favour, Mr. Sheridan denounced the clergyman who made it.

Mr. GARRICK had some difficulty in coming to a conclusion on this question, owing to the fact that he could hardly see why, for a subordinate place like Maryborough, the sub-collector of customs should receive £500 or £550 per year. It seemed to him *primâ facie* that when he was raised to such a position, the only avenue open to him to gain a further increase was by promotion; but he did think that Mr. Sheridan's was a very exceptional case, and on that ground he would support the increase. Mr. Sheridan, it appeared, had been in the service of this colony and New South Wales for upwards of thirty years, and from 1862 to 1865 he was receiving £550 per year—£400 as sub-collector of customs, £100 as harbour-master, and £50 as immigration agent. In 1865 these offices were amalgamated, and Mr. Sheridan then received a lump sum of £550. When the bad times came in 1867 the salaries of the Civil servants of the colony, including Mr. Sheridan's, were reduced. Mr. Sheridan's was reduced to £500; and that gentleman had since then remained at the reduced salary, although the other officers had resumed their former status. The whole question resolved itself into this—Whether, as a matter of fairness, the increase should be voted? He thought it should, and that there were good reasons for it. A great deal had been said about Mr. Sheridan being a political agent; but he did not himself see why any Civil servant, particularly in a young colony like this, where there were so many, should not have the same right of expressing his political opinions as any other citizen. Then it had been said that Mr. Sheridan had helped both sides. Well that generally happened in colonial politics. He would also point out to the committee, as a most singular thing, that in 1874 when the Palmer Ministry was in office, it was proposed to increase Mr. Sheridan's salary from £500 to £600

a-year. The present opposition was, therefore, very inconsistent. So far as he was able to hear, Mr. Sheridan had performed his duties efficiently, and his position was an exceptional one. He maintained that the committee had no right to punish him for his interference in politics, by refusing the increase; and that it came with bad taste from the Opposition to object to grant an increase of £50, when in 1874 they asked for £100.

Mr. STEVENSON said that the honourable member who had just spoken had shown that Mr. Sheridan was an overpaid officer for many years. It had been denied by some honourable members, and alleged by others, that he was a political agent. It was notorious that he was a political agent, and that the honourable member for Dalby, when holding the office of Colonial Treasurer, suspended Mr. Sheridan for being a political agent. The honourable member for Brisbane had accused the honourable member for Mulgrave with having been biased when sitting on the Polynesian Inquiry Committee. He (Mr. Stevenson) denied that, and asserted that if there was any biased member on that committee it was the honourable member for Brisbane. He did not think there could have been a more disinterested committee, because only two of its members were employers of Polynesians. As regarded the accusation of the honourable member for Burke, that the honourable member for Mulgrave bullied Mr. Sheridan in his examination, he might say that he never saw anything of the kind, and that he thought his conduct was very fair, indeed. It was well known that the honourable member for Brisbane had brought witnesses from all parts of the colony to back up his opinion. He had brought a man named Matson from Rockhampton, who had been three times dismissed from the Government service, although he was well aware of the fact.

Mr. STEWART said the honourable member for Clermont chose to say he was biased. This was because he did not think the same as the honourable member for Clermont, who was himself an employer of Polynesian labour. If he had known that there were two members of the committee who were employers of Polynesians he would have objected to it. He never saw a committee more decidedly biased. As for his bringing witnesses from all parts of the colony, he brought one only from Rockhampton, who had been a labour agent, and, therefore, well fitted to give evidence. But the report was not before the committee—it was the question of a well-deserved increase to a customs official.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that Mr. Sheridan's former friends had proposed an increase to his salary, but his then enemies opposed it; and now the position was entirely

reversed. There were interested motives on both sides, as they were influenced by the views they held on the Polynesian question. If Mr. Sheridan had not shown himself an anti-Kanaka man there would have been no attempt made to increase his salary. The debate showed the necessity of introducing two Bills. One was a Bill to regulate the Civil service, for under the present system it was impossible for a Civil servant to get pure justice. The other was necessary for the welfare of the colony,—he meant a good Polynesian Bill, without which they would never have any peace in the House. However, he would take the simple question at issue, and he maintained that the present salary paid to Mr. Sheridan was sufficient. It was in excess of the amounts paid at Townsville and at Cooktown. He should vote against the increase. If a good Civil Service Bill was introduced it would very likely entitle him to more money; but until then he hoped the increase would not be voted.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if even £100 had been put on the Estimates by the Palmer Administration, as an increase to Mr. Sheridan, he was not bound by the fact. If that gentleman had been looked upon as a political agent for each side of the House, it showed how prominent a part he had taken in politics, and there was never an election in Maryborough in which his name was not dragged to the front. And it was remarkable that not another Civil servant on the list had been subjected to similar accusations. He was surprised to find that the Colonial Secretary, who had so strenuously opposed the increase last year, agreed to it now.

Mr. Fox said that there was no doubt that when Mr. Sheridan's salary had been originally reduced he was being paid largely in excess of other Civil servants. He admitted that Civil servants had a right to an opinion on politics, but they should be guided by some principle, and not make their politics subservient to their private interests, as Mr. Sheridan appeared to have done.

Mr. KING said that there was a good reason for the vote passing, in the fact that the public would be certain to take the rejection as having been caused by the report sent in by Mr. Sheridan, and as a sort of punishment for it. It was very important that Polynesian inspectors should be quite independent, for they would be sometimes compelled to censure, in their reports, very influential people. But the rejection of this increase would be a direct inducement to them to send in trimming reports that would offend no one. The report of this debate, with the comments of the Press on it, would get into the hands of English societies who accused the colony of practising slavery, and would be used by them to discredit all reports

from Polynesian inspectors—who, it would be said, feared to tell the truth.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that the argument cut both ways, for the increase might be considered a reward for sending in an anti-Polynesian report. He denied that the discussion was on the question of Polynesian labour, and regretted that an honourable gentleman holding the position of Speaker should throw down an apple of discord among them. Mr. Sheridan was one of the most pampered Civil servants in the colony, and had been a spoilt child of many Ministries. Many increases had been refused to hard-working Civil servants; and in his opinion it would be better to increase the salaries of deserving young men and pension off the old ones. He was willing to give £5 towards a subscription to Mr. Sheridan to go away, and it was only on principle that he stopped there that night to oppose the vote.

Mr. STEVENSON pointed out that no one proposed to decrease Mr. Sheridan's salary. They simply said that he was an overpaid officer, and he denied that the discussion hinged on the Polynesian question.

Mr. IVORY moved that the vote be reduced by £150, in order to test the feeling of the House with regard to the unwarrantable action of the Government last session in giving Mr. Sheridan a gratuity of £100. Mr. Sheridan, when he drew up his report on the Polynesian question, had had next to no opportunities of making himself acquainted with the subject; and when he drew up the report he had not been more than two or three months employed in that capacity. Judging from the documents he had read, he did not think Mr. Sheridan was the energetic individual he had been represented to be, and it was perfectly absurd for the Government, without inquiry, and on the mere *ipse dixit* of Mr. Sheridan himself, to grant him this *douceur* of £100.

Mr. MOREHEAD supported the amendment.

Question—That the item objected to be reduced by £150—put and negatived.

Mr. IVORY moved that the item be reduced by £149 19s.

Question put.

The committee divided :—

AYES, 9.

Messrs. Low, W. Scott, Walsh, McIlwraith, Ivory, J. Scott, Palmer, Morehead, and Stevenson.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Douglas, Dickson, Griffith, McLean, Miles, Thorn, Hockings, Kingsford, O'Sullivan, Perkins, Grimes, Foote, Murphy, Garrick, King, Tyrel, Fraser, Bailey, Beattie, Macrossan, Graham, and Stewart.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. WALSH wished to explain, with regard to the vote he had just given, that his object was to express his condemnation of the action of the Government in paying the £100 to Mr. Sheridan, in violation of the express decision of this Chamber last session, and not with any desire that Mr. Sheridan's salary should be reduced by that amount. He only regretted that there were not more members of the committee who felt it their duty to mark their condemnation of that item. When they remembered the disgrace that accompanied that gift, honourable members should blush to think that their decision was not only defied, but defied in most fulsome and most improper terms. The present question was one affecting Mr. Sheridan's salary, and he would suggest that the Government should withdraw the proposed increase of £50.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Do I understand from the honourable member that Mr. Sheridan should give sixteen months of his labour as inspector of Polynesians, and get nothing for it? The labourer, surely, is worthy of his hire.

Mr. WALSH: That is not the question I advanced, but I can easily answer it. Mr. Sheridan is the only officer in the Government service who has received any emolument for being Polynesian inspector. It should also be remembered that all these duties which Mr. Sheridan performs so well are generally of his own seeking.

Mr. STEWART stated that the system of paying Polynesian inspectors from this same fund had been in vogue for some time.

Mr. STEVENSON thought Mr. Sheridan ought to be paid for his services; but not in the way in which he had been paid. The gentleman who acted as Polynesian inspector at Rockhampton during the past five years had never received a single sixpence, although he successfully filled several offices. He (Mr. Stevenson) would vote against this £50, because he considered Mr. Sheridan was already well paid.

Mr. MOREHEAD considered it was strange that the Government had allowed other proposed increases to go, but were making a fight over Mr. Sheridan.

Question—That the item objected to be reduced by £50—put.

The committee divided:—

YES, 12.

Messrs. Palmer, Walsh, McLlwraith, Bailey, Ivory, J. Scott, W. Scott, Stevenson, Morehead, Graham, Macrossan, and Low.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Douglas, Dickson, McLean, Perkins, Griffith, Thorn, Stewart, Kingsford, Hockings, Tyrel, Fraser, Grimes, O'Sullivan, Foote, Miles, Garrick, Murphy, and Beattie.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that although he believed that the second officer who was down for an increase of £25 was an admirable officer, yet he had only been seven years in the employment of the Government, and was not entitled to the increase. He would move that the item be reduced by £25.

Mr. WALSH said that before that was put he would move that the first item be reduced by £48.

A discussion ensued as to the way in which the question should be put, during the course of which—

Mr. MOREHEAD said, that owing to the greater voting powers of the Ministerial party, it was impossible that the Opposition could get justice done them.

Mr. GARRICK objected strongly to so sweeping and unfounded an assertion. The honourable member for Mitchell had complained bitterly about hard things having been said of him by the Premier, and yet he did not hesitate to make use of even stronger and more objectionable language himself to the whole of the Ministerial side of the House. He would take the opportunity of saying, that the waste of public time and money caused by the conduct of the honourable member for Mitchell, and one or two other members on that side of the House, was enormous, and subversive of all principles of Parliamentary government.

Mr. WALSH said that perhaps the language of the members on the Opposition side was not so becoming or so pleasant to honourable members as might be desired; but it was the result of the example set by the gentlemen who now arrogated to themselves the government of the country, because they sat on the other side of the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was the judge of his course of conduct, and he would not sit there to be lectured by the honourable member for East Moreton or anyone else. If his constituents were dissatisfied with him he was willing to resign; but so long as he held a seat in the House he intended to do his duty in his own way.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that the delay did not arise from any obstruction by the Opposition, but from the want of control over the House exhibited by the Government.

The PREMIER said that the reason was, because some honourable members on the other side were determined not to go on with business. They did not care how long the session lasted, because they, no doubt, intended to blame Government for any delay. If the honourable member for Mitchell had been more temperate he would have had a better division. Some honourable members of the Opposition seemed only to care for brute force—a display of physical endurance. The honourable member for Maranoa cast the blame on Government; but he denied it,

and believed that the difficulty had been caused by the wiles of that honourable gentleman himself.

Mr. IVORY said that the Premier was the chief cause of the House going off into digressions—it was his own habit.

Mr. GARRICK said he would like to know if this was a question to be settled by reason or physical force. He always understood it to be the duty of Opposition leaders to keep their rank and file in order; and he would ask honourable members to compare both sides of the House, and see on which side that duty had been performed.

Mr. WALSH said that the last speaker himself was not a regular attendant, or he would have known that this had been a session remarkable for early closing. He denied that the Opposition was factious, and asserted that it had been invited by the Colonial Treasurer to oppose this vote. The only argument actually brought forward against them was, that because the honourable member for the Mitchell had been somewhat intemperate, therefore the committee was to vote an improper and excessive salary.

Question—That the item objected to be reduced by £48—put and negatived.

Mr. FRASER said that if the separate items of the vote were put *seriatim*, it would simplify the dispute.

The COLONIAL TREASURER now moved that a vote of £550 be granted on account of the sub-collector's salary at Maryborough.

After some discussion on a point of procedure,

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a vote of £350 be granted on account of the second officer's salary at Maryborough. This officer had been ten years in the department. It was true that in 1875 his salary was increased by £25; but the present increase was placed on the Estimates in consequence of a strong recommendation that the second officer at Maryborough was one of the best officers in the service.

Mr. MOREHEAD, personally, should like to see the increase given. He believed that this Civil servant was a most efficient and deserving officer; but he was not more deserving than many other officers in the service. Three or four years ago his salary was raised by £100 in one lump. He disputed the Colonial Treasurer's statement that he had been ten years in the department.

The PREMIER: Ten years in the service.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had only been seven years in the customs department. If the Government were prepared to come down with a general increase he was willing to discuss this question on its merits; but in comparison with other officers he considered the present salary sufficient.

Mr. STEVENSON advocated an increase to the second officer and landing-waiter at Rockhampton, who had been fifteen years in the department, and ten years in his present position.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have already said that I intend to place £25 on the Supplementary Estimates for him.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that the true remedy for the evils of the service would be the introduction of a Civil Service Bill, and the Government seemed in no hurry about doing so. It was his duty to point out, respecting the item under discussion, that four increases were asked for Maryborough. If the Government intended to make them all party questions he would simply record his protest.

Mr. FOOTE said that he should vote for a reduction in the proposed increases, and he believed that if the Opposition had taken a different tone, the last division might have resulted differently.

Mr. MOREHEAD moved that the salary of the second officer be reduced by £25.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said they had no intention of making any of these salaries party questions—the last had been partly made one by the other side. In consequence of the increase of business at all ports north of Brisbane he had recommended increases to all the second officers of customs stationed at them. He left the item, however, with the committee.

Mr. WALSH objected to such an abandonment. The present second officer was a most deserving man.

Mr. IVORY was glad that the committee were inclined to adopt a common-sense view, although they had voted an increase because of a little ebullition of temper on the Opposition side. For his own part, he set his face against all increases at the present time.

Mr. STEWART said that the salary paid to this officer had increased by 75 per cent. in five years.

Mr. MOREHEAD hoped that the committee would vote for the reduction.

Question—That the item be reduced—put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £200 be granted for the clerk and landing-waiter at Maryborough. This item showed an increase of £20 on the vote of last year.

Mr. FOOTE moved that the item be reduced by £20.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £290 be granted for two clerks at Maryborough. This was an increase of £15 to one clerk, and £25 to the other. They were both good officers, and would be better paid were they to leave the service and go into a bank.

Mr. FRASER said that was a good reason why they should not have the increase. Everything that could be done should be

done to discourage young men from preferring the Civil service to other careers, simply because it was the Civil service.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN agreed with the remarks of the honourable member for Bandanba, but at the present time the Civil service was almost the only field open for young men in Queensland. He did not think such large salaries should be given to junior clerks, who were boys.

Mr. STEWART said that both these clerks got an increase last year, one of £50 and the other of £30.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the honourable member for Brisbane was mistaken, as one of them had never had an increase since he entered the service.

Mr. FOOTE moved that the item be reduced by £40.

Question put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 11.

Messrs. Kingsford, Stewart, Hockings, Ivory, McLean, Stevenson, Morehead, Foote, Fraser, McIlwraith, and Grimes.

NOES, 11.

Messrs. Douglas, Miles, Dickson, O'Sullivan, Griffith, Thorn, Tyrel, Beattie, Murphy, Garrick, and Perkins.

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting vote with the Ayes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £381 be granted for tide-waiter and keeper of powder magazine, coxswain, and boatman at Maryborough. These items were the same as last year.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a vote of £510 be granted on account of customs at Bundaberg.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a vote of £560 be granted on account of customs at Port Curtis and Baffle Creek.

Mr. FOOTE did not think a sub-collector at Port Curtis was required; or, at all events, the coxswain and warehouseman could be dispensed with. He would move that the amount set down for that officer (£160) should be omitted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the customs revenue collected at Port Curtis amounted to £2,650 last year. The coxswain and warehouseman entered the service in 1860, and occupied his present office since 1868. So long as customs were maintained at Port Curtis the present staff was required.

Question—That the item objected to be omitted—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 3.

Messrs. Fraser, Foote, and Grimes.

1877—3 M

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Stewart, Douglas, Hockings, Perkins, Low, Garrick, Stevenson, Murphy, G. Thorn, McIlwraith, Morehead, Tyrel, Kingsford, Dickson, Griffith, Ivory, W. Scott, Miles, McLean, Beattie, and O'Sullivan.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. IVORY would like to know who was the individual who performed the duties of coast-waiter at Baffle Creek for £35? Had he any other office in the Government service?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the coast-waiter was a resident of Baffle Creek, who undertook to do the duty for the sum named. The arrangement had been in existence since 1865, and the gentleman's name was Robertson.

Mr. FOOTE asked how many vessels went into Baffle Creek?

Mr. IVORY said it was a most extraordinary amount to appear on the Estimates, and he wished to know if the gentleman was qualified to act as a pilot also?

Mr. BEATTIE would like to know in what position the Government would be if an accident occurred, and the insurance was vitiated because the vessel was not in charge of a pilot, although a person authorized by Government. If they wanted a pilot, why not pay one, then?

Mr. STEVENSON asked who Mr. Robertson was?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A squatter.

The PREMIER said that he was well acquainted with the port, an efficient navigator, and the proprietor of the neighbouring station, who was willing to take this amount and perform the duties.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that such important duties should not be left in quasi-experienced hands. He presumed the place was a port, though there was no collector of customs, and any amount of smuggling might go on. The only squatter he knew capable of acting as pilot was the honourable member for Balonne.

Mr. Low did not see that the fact of a man being a squatter should be any objection against his acting as coast-waiter.

The COLONIAL TREASURER would inform the committee that Baffle Creek was not a port of entry, and the present arrangement had been found to work very well.

Mr. STEVENSON asked whether the port of Baffle Creek was only kept open for Mr. Robertson's station? He doubted whether any vessel had ever been known to put in there from stress of weather.

Mr. BEATTIE said that some years ago, when there was a boiling-down establishment at Baffle Creek, ships used to go there from Sydney.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £2,292 be granted for the customs at Rock-

hampton. The only increase in this item was £10 each for the three tide-waiters. Rockhampton was one of the ports of the colony which had exhibited an increase of revenue during the past year, and the duties of the tide-waiters had been consequently increased.

Mr. STEVENSON called attention to the fact that the sub-collector at Rockhampton had only £480 a-year, while the sub-collector at Maryborough had £550. The revenue derived from the port of Maryborough was £34,000 a-year, while that derived from Rockhampton, including excise, was £70,000, or more than double the amount. He wished to know whether it was the intention of the Colonial Treasurer to make any addition to the salary of the sub-collector at Rockhampton on the Supplementary Estimates.

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that it was not. The extra amount granted to the sub-collector at Maryborough was not an increase of salary, but was merely to reinstate him in his former position.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was a dog-in-the-manger policy to refuse an increase to the second officer at Rockhampton because the second officer at Maryborough did not get one.

Mr. MURPHY did not understand that the Colonial Treasurer's promise was contingent upon the vote passing for the Maryborough officer. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would reconsider his decision, and put a small increase on the Supplementary Estimates for the Rockhampton officer.

Mr. McILWRAITH urged upon the Colonial Treasurer the desirability of adjourning, as it was evident the committee were not in the humour to go on with the business at that late hour.

The COLONIAL TREASURER thought the committee might fairly get to the end of the next page before adjourning. With respect to the second officer at Rockhampton, he would point out that that gentleman got his salary raised by £25 in 1874. In the face of the expression of opinion against increases which had been already given by the committee, he could not consent to place anything on the Supplementary Estimates for him.

After some further discussion as to the desirableness of adjourning,

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would finally ask, whether it was intended to throw overboard the second officer at Rockhampton?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said his refusal was not based on the ground that the second officer at Maryborough had not got an increase, but on account of the very general expression of opinion that no increases should be made where the officers were already in receipt of large salaries.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that a vote of £658 be granted on account of

customs at St. Lawrence. There was an increase of £25 for the second officer, who had been only receiving £150, and well merited the addition now asked for.

Mr. IVORY said none of the other second officers had got increases, and he could see no reason why this one should be made an exception.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER proposed a vote of £17,108 on account of customs at Pioneer River (Mackay), Port Denison (Bowen), Cleveland Bay (Townsville), Port Hinchinbrook (Cardwell), Herbert River, Endeavour River (Cooktown), Trinity Bay, Somerset, Sweer's Island, and Normanton, and contingencies. The chief increase was at the port of Cooktown, bringing the salaries there to a level with those at Townsville, and as the revenue of the port of Cooktown was £70,000, he thought there would be no objection. The appointment of several officers at Trinity Bay was a new one, making the staff complete. Somerset being no longer a free port, a collector was required, as the police magistrate had been removed to Thursday Island. There was no increase to the second officer at Townsville, as he had just been promoted.

Mr. BEATTIE asked what trade there was at the Herbert River?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he could not state the amount. A collector was stationed there chiefly to protect revenue, large supplies being forwarded to the sugar plantations on that river.

Mr. McILWRAITH asked if the second officer at Cairns would be removed to Island Point if necessary?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would, if it was found that he could be spared from Cairns, which it must be remembered included Smithfield.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Friday.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to two o'clock.