

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1912

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER, 1912.

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

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

Annual report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for the year 1911.

Report on Government relief for twelve months ended 30th June, 1912.

Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for the year 1911.

Annual report of the Commissioner of Public Health to 30th June, 1912.

Report of Mr. District Court Judge Macnaughton's inquiry into the office of the Chief Commissioner of Stamps.

QUESTIONS.

PAY DAY AT MOUNT PERRY.

Mr. ADAMSON (*Rockhampton*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is he aware that the Queensland Copper Company, Mount Perry, is now paying its employees their monthly pay on the Sundays?"

"2. Is he aware that this is the cause of an abnormal amount of Sunday drinking?"

"3. That it also causes a lot of unnecessary Sunday work for the clerks and others?"

"4. That it is the cause of much Sabbath desecration, and is very offensive to many respectable people in Mount Perry?"

"5. Will he make inquiries into this matter, and, if possible, put a stop to this nuisance?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—

"1 and 5. No; but from inquiries made have learned that in compliance with request of contractors, who could only meet on Sunday, payments were made on that day on two occasions (4th August and 8th September). The management, however, have decided not again to accede to wish of contractors, and to make no more payments on Sunday.

"2. No; and the information furnished by the clerk of petty sessions is that the total convictions for drunkenness at Mount Perry from 1st July, 1909, to 7th October instant were seventeen, only three of the convicted persons being employees of the Queensland Copper Company.

"3. On the two Sundays in question the accountant and two clerks were occupied for three hours in the apportionment and distribution of wages.

"4. My inquiries do not disclose any desecration of the Sabbath, since the payments were made between the hours of 12 o'clock and 1 p.m., thus affording those who desired to do so an opportunity of attending divine service.

"5. Yes; every effort has and will be made to put a stop to any illegal Sunday drinking."

LONGREACH RAILWAY.

Mr. ADAMSON asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What is the cause of the delay in supply-trucks to carry the 350,000 sheep (fats) from Longreach to Brisbane, which were recently purchased in that district for the Southern meatworks?"

"2. What proportion of the earnings of the stock trains from Longreach to Brisbane is credited to the Central Queensland Railway system?"

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

"1. The live stock traffic has been heavy for some time, and between 1st October and 9th November orders have been accepted to convey 113,310 sheep from Barcaldine, Ilfracombe, and Longreach. Most of these are coming from Longreach to meatworks near Brisbane. The Commissioner has not heard of any complaint, but he will make inquiry.

"2. The earnings are divided on a mileage basis, in accordance with the usual practice."

ACCIDENTS ON STATE RAILWAYS.

Mr. ADAMSON asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Is the absolute block system in force on the railways between Brisbane and Ipswich?"

"2. If not, what system is in force—the permissive block system?"

"3. How many serious accidents have taken place on the railways of this State during the last twelve months?"

"4. How many employees have been injured and killed during the last twelve months, together with their names and ages?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. and 2. The installation of the absolute block telegraph system between Goodna and Bundamba, together with complete interlocking appliances, has been in hand for some months; the block telegram instruments were fitted in place, and after having been availed of for practising purposes for several weeks have now been brought into permanent use. The block system has thus been inaugurated by instruments only, as the manufacture of the interlocking appliances and starting signals for Goodna and Dinmore is not yet complete, owing to the great amount of similar material being made for other stations in various parts of the State. All the other sections between Brisbane and Ipswich are complete, both as to block telegraph instruments and interlocking.

"3. Four—not including injuries to railway employees.

"4. 1,006 injured; 13 killed.

"Fatal accidents.—J. A. Bradshaw, age 16; R. Hough, age 44; W. English, age 57; A. Simpson, age 15; W. Shallcross, age 31; T. McMahon, age 24; W. Munro, age 45; C. Hattoz, age 15; W.

McLaughlin, age 56; T. J. Hogan, age 32; H. Squires, W. C. Blair, F. Hanlon, temporarily employed on construction work—age unknown.

"Permanent employees seriously injured.—F. Latham, age 18; J. Kelly, age 21; E. Howman, age 31.

"Temporary employees seriously injured (mostly on construction work)—ages unknown.—H. Fisher, P. Brown, E. Schrage, E. Woolgar, J. McCormack, J. Purtell, J. O'Shea, P. Sutton, D. Conn, A. Ahlberg, S. Hammond, H. Martin, J. Diamond, J. Bohan, G. Hartley, F. O'Connor, J. Smith, R. Thompson, E. Lourigan, F. McNamee, T. Mathieson, H. Campbell, G. King. Sundry minor accidents, many of them quite trivial and in some cases not necessitating cessation of work, 980."

NEW RAILWAY WORKSHOPS, ROCKHAMPTON.

Mr. ADAMSON asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What is the cause of the delay in commencing the erection of the new railway workshops in Rockhampton?"

"2. When does the Government intend commencing the work of erecting these workshops?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. As explained in reply to a question by the hon. member on 30th July last, the delay has been owing to the plans having to be prepared, and the fact that negotiations with the municipal council were not completed.

"2. The Loan Estimates for the current year include £10,000 on account of this work, which will be commenced in a few weeks."

GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. FIHELLY (*Paddington*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"Is it the intention of the Government to extend the operation of the State Savings Bank so as to cover the field at present monopolised by private banking institutions?"

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

"No."

STATE INSURANCE OFFICE.

Mr. FIHELLY asked the Chief Secretary—

"Is it the intention of the Government to introduce this session legislation enabling a State insurance office to be established?"

The PREMIER replied—

"No."

CAPITAL CRIMES.

Mr. FIHELLY asked the Home Secretary—

"What is the number of capital crimes committed in Queensland since 1st January, 1896, the perpetrators of which are still undiscovered?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"As the information asked for by the hon. member will require considerable research and therefore take some time, I would ask him to be good enough to ask for a return."

Mr. FIHELLY: We want the information before the Commissioner's salary is discussed.

REPORTED TICK-DESTROYING MICROBE.

Mr. GILLIES (*Eucham*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Has his attention been called to a reported discovery of a tick-destroying microbe by Mr. Munro Hull of Eumundi?"

"2. If so, has he arranged to have the fullest experiments carried out regarding same?"

"3. As this discovery appears to be one of great national importance, will he endeavour to secure the said discovery as a State monopoly?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. Tolmie, *Toowoomba*) replied—

"1. My attention has been drawn to a skin affection of cows which is supposed to be detrimental to ticks.

"2. Yes.

"3. When its value is proved further action will be determined."

REPORT OF INSPECTOR OF ORPHANAGES.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*), without notice, asked the Home Secretary—

"When may we expect the report of the Inspector of Orphanages?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"I had hoped to have laid it on the table this afternoon, but owing to a typographical error it had to be returned to the Government Printing Office. I hope to lay the report on the table to-morrow at latest."

Mr. THEODORE: Has the report been given to the newspapers before being laid on the table of the House?

The HOME SECRETARY: Not that I am aware of.

PORT CURTIS ELECTION PETITION.

REPORT OF ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following letter from the Elections Judge:—

"Judges' Chambers, Supreme Court, Brisbane.

"To The Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

"Mr. Speaker.—The petition of John Henry Kessell, of Gladstone, presented the eleventh day of July last, complaining of the undue election and return of Edward Denis Joseph Breslin as a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Port Curtis, and claiming that it might be determined that the said Edward Denis Joseph Breslin was not duly elected and returned for

the said electoral district of Port Curtis, but that the said John Henry Kessell was duly elected and ought to have been returned, as the sitting member of the Legislative Assembly for the said electoral district, and that the said John Henry Kessell might be declared as such sitting member for the said electoral district, or in the alternative that the said election might be declared void and that a new election for the said electoral district might be ordered to be holden, was tried before the Elections Tribunal on the sixteenth, nineteenth, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-seventh days of September, the first, second, third, fourth, and eighth days of October instant.

"The assessors chosen by the parties and sworn were George Phillips Barber, Charles Joseph Booker, Donald Gunn, Herbert Freemont Hardacre, John Payne, and Harry Frederick Walker, members of the Legislative Assembly.

"On the fourth of October the parties requested and obtained from the tribunal an adjournment until the eighth of October to enable them to consider their respective positions, and to confer together with a view to shortening the proceedings, and of considering the advisability of the further prosecution of the petition. On the eighth of October, Mr. Feez, K.C., senior counsel for the petitioner, made to the tribunal the following announcement, to which Mr. Graham, counsel for the respondent, assented, viz.: The parties, after careful consideration of their respective positions, have come to the conclusion that a further contest would not alter the position which the matter is in at present—viz., that the election must be declared void. They therefore desire the tribunal to determine and the judge to declare that the election was and is void, and that the one hundred pounds in court be ordered to be paid out to the petitioner. Each party has agreed that there shall be no appeal on any matter that has arisen during the hearing of the petition.

"At the aforesaid request of the parties, and it appearing to the tribunal that, if the petition were further prosecuted, the election must in any event be determined to be void, the tribunal determined that the election was void, and in accordance with that determination I declared the election void.

"The assessors further determined that the sum of one hundred pounds, paid into court with the petition, should be restored to the petitioner, and I ordered and directed accordingly.

"No determination was asked for or made in respect of the costs of the proceedings.

"All which I hereby certify.

"A copy of the evidence given at the trial accompanies this certificate.

"C. E. CHUBB, Elections Judge.

"Supreme Court, 9th October, 1912."

The PREMIER: I move that the certificate of the Elections Judge declaring void the election of Edward Denis Joseph Breslin for the electoral district of Port Curtis, be entered on the journals of the House, and

[*Hon. D. F. Denham.*

that Mr. Speaker do issue his writ for the election of a member to serve in this House for the said electoral district.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that the evidence taken in the case be printed.

Question put and passed.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY, this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—SECOND ALLOTTED DAY.

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

Question stated—That the sum of £2,130 be granted for "Intelligence and Tourist Bureau"—

Mr. FIDELLY (*Paddington*) noticed that there was a sum of £850 down for "Railway fares and freights, postage and incidental expenses." He hoped the Premier would give the Committee some detailed information respecting that amount.

The PREMIER: This was a very comprehensive list, as it included railway fares and freights, postage and incidental expenses for both the Sydney and Brisbane offices.

Mr. FIDELLY: Is it merely for the officers connected with those offices?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. FIDELLY: And not for the travelling tourists?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. FIDELLY: That is all I wanted to know.

Mr. FOLEY (*Mundingburra*) wanted to emphasise what had already been said about the good work that was being done by the compiler at the Tourist Bureau, and he was not adequately paid at £170. The articles which that gentleman wrote were well put together, and contained an immense amount of intelligence and a great deal of the history of Queensland. It was useful information for Queenslanders to know, and also for those who came here from other places. He happened to know the compiler, and remembered him when he was employed on a daily newspaper in Townsville, and he got a larger salary there than he was receiving now.

Mr. GRANT: Why did he take this position?

Mr. FOLEY: He supposed that the man was out of work at the time. He knew that the officer's heart was in his work, but the salary was very low compared with what it was in Sydney. The compiler not only wrote the articles that were contained in the hand-books, but he also supplied articles to newspapers for circulation in Queensland, Australia, and even in the old country. He did much better work in the way of encouraging people to come to Queensland than

the immigration agents who were sent home at large salaries. He hoped that the Premier would put a larger amount on the Supplementary Estimates for the compiler.

The PREMIER: This officer had been in the employ of the Government for about fifteen or sixteen months. He was a journalist by profession.

Mr. FOLEY: He used to get £4 10s. a week in Townsville.

The PREMIER: The appointment was not a classified one. It was an appointment that was made from outside the service and anyone could have applied for it.

Mr. FIBELLY: The Sydney director was a similar appointment?

The PREMIER: Quite so. There were a number of applications received for the position, and the present compiler was anxious to secure it, and he did not cease to have his claims pressed. Happily they were sustained by good qualifications, and he got the appointment. His application was covered by references from leading journalists throughout Queensland, and he accepted it at the salary offered. They were giving him some slight recognition by putting down an increase of £14, and if he continued in the Government service and continued to do good work his service would be fully recognised.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRANT (*Fitzroy*) asked if the compiler wrote the articles concerning Central and Northern Queensland from the little office in George street? If that were so, it was a mistake, as it could not be done from Brisbane, and he could not do justice to Central Queensland in that way. He had not such a high opinion of the compiler as the hon. member for Mundingburra had, probably because he succeeded a much abler man—a man who was a genius, the late George Essex Evans—and of course any man following Essex Evans would naturally suffer by comparison. He was glad to learn that something was going to be done in the Sydney office. Any member of the Queensland Parliament going to that office in Sydney must feel ashamed of it, and it was nothing else than as described by the hon. member for Paddington—a curiosity shop. (Laughter.) It contained a lot of emu eggs and things like that. He understood that the director was popular in Sydney because he perambulated up and down George street with that great stick of his and advertised Queensland. (Laughter.) They should go in more for attracting tourists to Queensland like they did in New Zealand, where it was really one of the industries of the Dominion. He would like to know if anything was being done in the Cairns district to provide facilities for travellers to see the sights that were to be seen there. They had the most delightful climate in the world in Queensland in the winter, and they should do all they could to attract visitors here during that period of the year.

Mr. MAY (*Flinders*) noticed that they had offices in only Sydney and Brisbane, but he thought the time had arrived when they should open an office in Melbourne and also in Adelaide. The various steamship companies issued little booklets containing information about Queensland, and they did a lot of advertising for Queensland in that way, and Queensland would do more if extra offices were opened in the other States. He happened to know Mr. Meston personally,

but he did not know that that gentleman was adapted to the position of manager of a tourist bureau. He doubted it very much since he had heard the views of members about the Sydney office. He had not been able to get to Sydney for twenty years, but when he did go he would have a look at the Queensland Tourist Bureau. He had seen curiosity shops in all parts of the world, and if they had one in the Queensland office in Sydney, then they should have a larger building and put the curiosity shop part of it into one corner and charge one penny each for admission—(laughter)—and in that way they would raise some money, which would go towards the maintenance of the establishment, and it would be more beneficial to the people of Queensland than it was at present. He only hoped that the Government would establish a thorough-going, straightforward office in Melbourne as well as in Sydney.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) said there were bores in Queensland whose waters were as good for curative purposes as the mineral waters of New Zealand. He had known men who were practically crippled to go and bathe in the bore waters in the West, and in a few weeks get all right. That was a thing that should be made known at the Intelligence Bureau. Then there was the wonderful scenery at the Einaleigh and Copperfield Rivers. There was one creek in that locality that rose and fell according to the state of the moon. (Laughter.) There were also very large water-springs, as big [4 p.m.] as artesian bores, there; and the water in one of them rose 4 or 5 feet above the ground. This large spring was supposed to run faster at the full moon. (Laughter.) Then there was the big limestone wall, extending 60 or 70 miles across Queensland, though not 5 per cent. of the people know anything about it. Those interesting places should be made more generally known.

Mr. GILLIES (*Eacham*): If the Government were going to cater for the tourist, they should make known the beauties of North Queensland. There were plenty of people who did not know the beauties of the Cairns hinterland, the Barron Falls, Stony Creek Falls, the hot springs, where people got cured of their rheumatism, the inland lakes—Lake Eacham and Lake Barrine—and the limestone caves of Chillagoe. Instead of establishing intelligence bureaux in other States, the Government would be well advised in encouraging tourists to visit the places he had mentioned by making those sights more accessible.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): After the criticism of the Sydney office, which came mostly from the other side, he thought the Premier would have made a statement as to his intention regarding the future working of that office. Several tourists had told him that they were not able to secure even literature at that office, though he learned at the Brisbane office that the Sydney branch was regularly supplied with literature. The idea of tourists was that the present director was more interested in delivering lectures on the stone age, the palaeolithic or neolithic age, going back to the days of the Egyptian mummy, rather than supplying tourists with facts and statistics. He thought a branch office should be established in Melbourne; and he thought that these offices, like the Railway Advertising Branch, could be made self-supporting. In his opinion, there

Mr. Barber.]

should be a new director for the Sydney office. The gentleman who ran the show at present made a very good showman, but was altogether out of place in managing an important department like the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau.

Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*) thought the criticism of the gentleman in charge of the Sydney bureau was hardly fair. If anyone was required to write up Queensland, Mr. Meston was as capable as any other man; and it seemed to him that the whole attack on the Sydney office arose from the fact of accusations having been made in the House that the Sydney office had been used as a labour agency in connection with the sugar industry. If that was so, why not wipe the thing out, instead of putting the blame on the man who happened to be in charge of the bureau, and who probably had to carry out certain instructions? It was not fair to condemn a man for doing something which he had probably been ordered to do. As to the Sydney office being an old curiosity shop, he supposed the Government were satisfied that those things were kept in the office. He had never been to the Sydney office. When he was in Sydney on one occasion a wire was sent to him from Mr. Kidston, and the gentleman in charge of the office put the police on to him, so he had no reason to be very thankful to that gentleman: at the same time, they should deal with Government officials from an absolutely fair standpoint. If the Government were not satisfied with the gentleman in charge of the Sydney office, he supposed they would remove him. On Friday night the Premier stated that the Sydney branch was visited last year by something like 20,000 people. Now, hon. members said the Sydney office was of no use; yet they suggested that another office should be established in Melbourne. It had also been stated that the shipping companies, by means of leaflets and books, did a great deal in the way of inducing people to visit Queensland. If that was so, instead of establishing more agencies, the Government might curtail expenditure in that direction.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): He had not a word to say against any of the officers employed in the Intelligence Bureau; but he would like to know what use these officers were to the people on the land—the people employed in the primary industries, who paid the principal part of the taxes and had to support these officers. There were many things more advantageous to Queensland than intelligence bureaux. They did not desire to go to New South Wales or Victoria or other places to attract their good settlers. If the settlers there liked to come here of their own free will, well and good; but if we tried to attract their good settlers, they might retaliate by establishing intelligence bureaux in Brisbane for the purpose of attracting our settlers to their States. It was sufficient to have one intelligence bureau in Queensland; and he would like to see the Sydney office abolished.

Mr. BOOKER (*Wide Bay*) would like the Chief Secretary to give the Committee information as to the number of people passing through the Sydney bureau during the year and likely to become settlers in Queensland. He assumed that a great deal of the opposition to the Sydney bureau was due to certain circumstances that occurred during the time of the sugar strike. No one had

any right to condemn the bureau for the purpose of getting at the officer in charge. His own opinion, however, was that this particular bureau had outlived its usefulness to some extent, and he was of opinion that were the vote supplemented by an equal amount, it would perhaps suffice to send a man to the dry wheat-growing areas of the United States. Such a man could get among the farmers who had lived among the dry conditions and had made of the dry belt of that country one of the chief wheat-producing sections of the world.

Mr. MURPHY: The Federal Government have a full report on that already.

Mr. BOOKER: We had a very large area of magnificent country that was very much better than much of the wheat-producing areas of America; but we wanted practical men from the United States to come to Queensland and demonstrate what could be done in the matter of raising wheat in dry areas. Before the influx of dairymen from the Northern Rivers of New South Wales the dairying industry in Queensland had been carried out under very rough conditions. When those men, however, came to Queensland they had, with their practical knowledge, demonstrated to Queenslanders what could be done in the way of dairying. That was a good illustration of what could be done for an industry by the introduction of practical men from other countries. The Australian Press was doing Queensland a very great service in the matter of advertising its resources. The *Sydney Mail* each week had its column of Queensland matter, and generally much more effective work in making known the possibilities of Queensland was done by the Press than by either the Sydney or Brisbane Intelligence Bureaus. He was quite satisfied that if something was done in the direction he had suggested of sending a practical man to the dry wheat-growing districts of the United States they would get a better return for their money than if they continued to spend it on the Sydney bureau. He really believed the Sydney office could be reasonably closed down, because the money could be better spent in other directions.

Mr. ADAMSON said he was not going to join in the chorus of condemnation of the man at the head of the Sydney bureau. Whenever he had visited Sydney that gentleman had always been exceedingly courteous to him. What things had influenced members in their remarks concerning the head of the Sydney bureau he did not pretend to know, but he was certain that nothing had been said by members on his side of the House during the current discussion on what had taken place last year at the bureau. He therefore thought it was unfair to charge hon. members with being influenced on account of what had taken place last year. Hon. members on his side had had their say on the question at the time and had not raked it up again during the present debate. He desired to suggest one method by which information concerning Queensland could be disseminated in New South Wales, provided the New South Wales authorities did not object thereto. Last year he was in one of the leading schools in New South Wales, and was shown round the school by the head master. The master had a very fine collection of views from New South Wales and the other States and also a sort of museum. This gentleman asked him if he could pro-

[Mr. Barber.

cure for him views of Queensland, and in compliance therewith, he (Mr. Adamson) had subsequently sent down a parcel of such views and books as would make known to the children of the school the possibilities of Queensland. Such a system might be extended, and it would, perhaps, be the means of attracting young men to come to Queensland. He did not pretend to be an advertising expert, but he thought it was a feasible way of making known the beauties and resources of Queensland and of attracting, in the future, desirable settlers to the State. Whether it was likely to be regarded as poaching on the preserves of another State he could not say, but he thought it would greatly assist in letting the people of other States know the possibilities of Queensland, which many held was the greatest State of the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman who had just sat down referred to the putting up of views of Queensland in the schools of the other States. He felt sure that the adoption of such a system would arouse no feelings of jealousy, and that New South Wales would readily agree to such a request were it preferred, the same as Queensland would do if such an application came from another State. Only the other day he had received a communication from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth asking for permission to put up in Queensland schools views of the Northern Territory, and he had readily acceded to the request. As to the utility of the Sydney office there was no doubt. Comparison between Sydney and Melbourne in that connection was needless. Sydney was the terminal port for nearly all the big shipping companies, and the visitors to Sydney, either for pleasure or other purposes, were more numerous than those to Melbourne.

Mr. LENNON: 75 per cent. of the visitors to the North during the season come from Victoria.

The PREMIER: That was to North Queensland. Because of the rigour of the Victorian winter, the people liked to go North to get into a more genial atmosphere. But as an inquiry dépôt the Sydney office was filling a big place indeed, and the man in charge was certainly seized of all information concerning Queensland. In fact, few men had better knowledge of the resources of the State. He granted that he was not an artist at window dressing, nor was there any need that Queensland should have an elaborate display at Sydney. However, if the Sydney office was not artistic, it was attractive. People had not passed by it but had gone in and had talked with those in charge. The lease of the Sydney office having approached expiry, they had inquired whether they could not have it removed with advantage, and they had come to the conclusion that the old site in Pitt street, opposite the Post Office, could not be bettered. Some delay had occurred in fixing the lease, but when that was done the window was altered. It was not considered desirable to waste space, for such was wanted for the accommodation of callers. He did not think it was necessary to have a bureau in Victoria. That matter had been under consideration off and on for a number of years, and he had been informed quite recently that Western Australia had abandoned its place in Victoria, as it had found that the result was not commensurate with the cost. It would, however, be quite a mistake to

think of closing the Sydney office. He agreed that they could not extol too much the glories of the North, and every year there was a growing number of people who were visiting North Queensland. These people were becoming missionaries to others, with the result that each year the number of passengers in the steamers from the South going North was increasing. About eighteen months ago they had arranged for nice avenues or paths to the Barron Falls, so that people could get a fuller and better view of the gorge and of the Falls as well. Further than that, he was hoping to make the North still more attractive to visitors by opening up the Chillagoe Caves.

Mr. GILLIES: What about the inland lakes?

The PREMIER: They were spending £100 a year in protecting, more than anything else, the Chillagoe Caves. It was not until about eighteen months since that he had learned of the caves and of the destruction that was there going on. He then took prompt action to avert that destruction in the future, and, more recently, he had obtained a report upon the caves which he proposed to circulate; and he thought that the action he was taking would result in the caves becoming more widely known than they were.

Mr. THEODORE: It is necessary to have a quicker railway service.

The PREMIER: Of course. They could not expect passengers to delay on the road all day, and if a tourist traffic were to be developed in connection with the Caves it would be necessary to have quicker despatch. Then they were sending up to the Herberton district trout, and if such became acclimatised in the Herberton streams they would be a source of attraction. People came to New Zealand from far off for the trout fishing. The idle rich and a lot of people in search of health would probably be very glad to spend a week or two in trout fishing in the Herberton district if that fish could become acclimatised there. Then, again, they were sending up some deer to the Herberton district so that in time they might serve to add to the attractions of that district. He was quite satisfied that when members of the Committee went to Sydney next they would find the Intelligence Bureau there somewhat remodelled in the interior. They would find the screen removed so that there would be more room and there would be facilities for a visitor to sit down at a table and write a letter or a telegram. There was a very fair supply of literature at the Sydney bureau. In fact, when he was last in Sydney there was a vast supply of literature at the bureau, and he could not understand people complaining that they were unable to get all the literature they wanted. The hon. member for Wide Bay had wanted to know how many had come to Queensland in consequence of the representations of the Sydney office. He could not answer that question offhand, but in a general fashion he understood there was quite a large number who had been so influenced.

Mr. FHELLY: Most of the visitors to the bureau now are from Queensland.

The PREMIER: He had in his box a detailed statement of the quests on which the various people had gone to the Tourist

Hon. D. F. Denham.]

Bureau. He frequently got letters of introduction from Sydney for land-seekers, and to his own knowledge there were men who were now settled in the State who had gained their first knowledge of Queensland from the Sydney office. Only last week he had had a most charming letter from settlers at Wondai—an Irishman and his wife from the United States, who were thoroughly well pleased with their action in settling in Queensland, and who mentioned that they were endeavouring to induce others to come to Queensland. That man had booked his passage from 'Frisco to another State. The

information obtained in Sydney [4.30 p.m.] led them to come over here, with the result that they had settled, and just twelve months after they settled in the Wondai district he received a letter saying how well pleased they were with the surroundings and that they hoped to influence others to come to Queensland. There might be an improvement made in the appearance of the building, but it would be a mistake to dispense with the office altogether. Having those views, he had taken a lease for three years.

Mr. MAY: The Premier had mentioned nothing at all about certain caves in the Camooweal district. Not far from the Georgina River there were numbers of stalactite caves, and one could go miles and miles underground in those caves, which would compare favourably with any to be found on the Blue Mountains or in the Chillagoe district. Of course they could not expect to get the tourists there until they had a railway, but in the reports mentioned by the Premier he should state something about the grandeur of the stalactite caves at Camooweal, as he was quite sure if that were done people would be drawn out there and would help forward the district.

Question put and passed.

MUSEUM, BRISBANE.

* The PREMIER moved that £2,788 be granted for "Museum." This was a decrease of £54 in the amount asked for last year. There was an increase in salaries, but there were two officers less than there were last year. The scientific assistant, who was getting £150 a year, had been retired. They also applied for a female attendant last year at £52, who was not required, and therefore they were not asking for the vote this year. That was a total reduction of £202, and there were increases in salaries this year totalling £148. He did not know whether hon. members had had time, within recent months, to visit the Museum. If they had not, then he hoped they would make it convenient to do so, and they would be more than pleased with the very manifest improvement in that institution. Of course, completeness was a work of time, though it could be expedited if more money were voted, but they were going along quietly with the money at command, and were securing many manifest advantages. Visitors to the institution could not fail to be interested at the present time in the distinct improvement. As the days go by, the Museum would be found fully worthy of sympathy.

Mr. LENNON was one of the members who had had the pleasure of visiting the Museum quite recently, and he was fully aware of what the Premier had stated. In-

[Hon. D. F. Denham.

deed, the Museum had been completely transformed during the past few months. That was due to the ability of the Director and his very able assistants. It was a real pleasure to go to the Museum now, as everything was so orderly and systematically arranged. It was not only a pleasure, but a real instruction as well. Up till quite recently he considered that the money spent on the Brisbane Museum was wasted, but he was glad to say he did not think so now. Advantage had been taken by the Director to invite school children to the institution, and they had benefited very much indeed by the instruction received, which was given to the children by the assistant. A system of lectures had also been introduced which, in every way, was a distinct advantage on the system prevailing hitherto. The only objection he had to the Museum was its situation. The place was not sufficiently central, and more particularly to visitors to Brisbane. Visitors from the West and North and from the other States generally resided in the city, and unless they made inquiries as to where that particular institution was located, they never came across it. In time perhaps the Government would find better quarters for the Museum. He had nothing except praise for the present management and the very marked improvement that had taken place during the past few months.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN could bear out the remarks of the hon. member for Herbert in regard to the Museum. He had the pleasure of visiting the institution quite recently, and had noticed the great difference in the arrangement of things in general. He only wished that the Museum was situated in a more central position, as the public would then patronise it to a much greater extent than they did now. If the Museum had been situated where the University was there would be some sense in it. He had attended a lecture at the Museum the other day on "Sea Shells and their Home," and it was a very instructive one indeed, and he hoped the lectures would be continued. He would also like to see the Museum advertised a little more. One occasionally saw a small advertisement in the papers, but it would be much better if a more attractive advertisement was put in the papers for an institution of that kind.

Mr. FIDELLY pointed out that the officials in the Museum had received very small increases. There was no £40 increase and no £30 increase, and he wished to point out that it was only those who came directly under the notice of the Minister who could get their salaries increased to such an extent.

Mr. WELSBY (*Merthyr*): Under the heading of "Contingencies" there was an item of £500 for specimens. He would like to draw the attention of members to the fact that the Amateur Fishermen's Association for many years had been collecting specimens of the different varieties of fish found in Queensland waters, and those specimens had been classified by Mr. Ogilvie. The society had gathered together within the last few years about 500 bottles of good specimens, and, for a very small consideration indeed, the society was willing to transfer the whole of those 500 bottles to the Museum, which would make a very attractive display. The fish had been taken from Moreton Bay up to as far as Cooktown, and had been classified by Mr. Ogilvie, who,

from time to time, had written certain books regarding them. The rooms of the Amateur Fishermen's Association were situated right at the top of Kent's Buildings, and were hard to get at, and they were getting overcrowded with specimens, and if the Government could see its way clear to pay for the cost of bottles he was quite sure Mr. Byrne and himself would be only too pleased to send the collection to the Museum. The bottles and their contents were insured for £250, and they were exceedingly valuable, and if they were transferred to the Exhibition they would prove a source of attraction. The specimens were far and away ahead of those in the Museum at the present time, and the two collections combined would be of great value. Of course it was understood, if the specimens were sent to the Museum, that they would still remain the property of the society. He would point out that the Amateur Fishermen's Association would probably ask the Premier for an endowment of £50 or £50 per annum, which money would be spent entirely in the purchase of bottles, and when the bottles were filled they would be sent out to the Museum.

Mr. CRAWFORD (*Mount Morgan*) asked for some information about the position of collector, who was down for £120. He would like to know what system was adopted for procuring collections for the Museum at present.

* The PREMIER: The collector's salary was £120, but in addition to that he received travelling expenses. He went into the hills and dales at the season of the year when the insects were at their best, and he collected specimens and took them to headquarters, where they were preserved. Regarding the suggestion of the hon. member for Merthyr, he would be glad in due course to discuss the matter with the society and the Director of the Museum, and if there was any business in it he would be glad to avail himself of the offer. (Hear, hear!)

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND.

* The PREMIER moved that £1,120 be granted for "Public Library of Queensland." He thought this was the best money that he was asking the House to vote.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: It was a most creditable library, and, in some respects, it was superior to the Parliamentary Library. There were not many libraries in Australasia, similar to it in size, that could surpass it in quality. There were 22,180 books in the library last year. The average attendance on week days was 580, and on Sunday 180. The library was open each week day from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and on Sunday from 2 p.m. till 6 p.m. The library was closed only on two days in the year—namely, Christmas Day and Good Friday. He quite anticipated that members would ask, "How is it that you are asking for £220 less this year than you asked for last year?" At first that question was a poser to him.

Mr. FIBELLY: You only spent £353 last year.

The PREMIER: It was quite true they did not spend the whole of the money voted last

year, and he could explain how it was brought about. The selectors studied the book reviews appearing in the *Saturday Review*, *Spectator*, *Athenæum*, *Times*, *Nation*, etc., and did not merely choose the books on the advertisements. They waited for a while and then they purchased them at a greatly reduced price.

Mr. FIBELLY: Twenty years afterwards.

The PREMIER: No; within a few months. If they looked through the last catalogue of the *Times*, they would see a number of modern books for sale cheap, and anyone going to the Public Library would find the best of those books there. They had modern books right up to date—the very best books that could be secured.

Mr. GRANT: Queensland newspapers are badly represented.

The PREMIER: That could be remedied. If he pressed for more money for the vote, he could probably have got it, as he was satisfied that members would not begrudge voting a little more for the library. There were five increases amounting to £80. They were not asking for an assistant this year. The amount was provided last year for an assistant, but they managed to do without him, and the amount was now £200 less than was asked for last year. There was £600 asked for last year for books, periodicals, and incidental expenses, but the amount was not all spent. If it were necessary to spend more than the amount voted he would not hesitate to do it.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*) thought the library was a very good one, and a large amount of literature of all descriptions was to be found there. The sum of £600 was voted last year, but only £347 was spent, and it was not spent on books. He would like to know the names of the people who picked the books for the library, and what instructions they had in regard to the class of books issued, as there was a feeling that they should go in for books of a very much higher class.

Mr. KIRWAN: Hear, hear! And especially reference books.

The PREMIER: The librarian took an active part in the selection of books, and the Under Secretary in the Chief Secretary's Department was also of great assistance in that regard. The Board of Advice which was appointed in 1906 consisted of Mr. Justice Real, Sir Arthur Rutledge, Messrs. J. L. Woolcock, Charles McLay, A. Norton, S. W. Brooks, and E. H. Macartney.

Mr. THEODORE: We will not get much socialistic literature from them.

The PREMIER: If anyone wanted up-to-date literature relating to the biggest problems of the day he would find it in the Public Library. He believed that if the books for the Parliamentary Library were selected with as great care and economy as was shown in the Public Library, they would get much better value for their money than they were getting now from the Parliamentary Library.

Mr. THEODORE: That is a reflection on the Library Committee.

The PREMIER: The Library Committee did not look for as great value as they did

[*Hon. D. F. Denham.*]

in the Public Library, because they took the books as they were issued, and that was quite right for a parliamentary library, but in the Public Library they wanted not only greater variety, but more discriminating selection. They had only to go and see the type of men and women who assembled there, and the manner in which they conducted themselves, to realise what an advantage this institution was. The hon. member for Fitzroy spoke about the Queensland newspapers being insufficient. He would be glad to get suggestions from any member of the Committee. He did not know if there was a suggestion book there, but if any member of Parliament suggested to him an addition to the periodicals or books he would be only too glad to give it the fullest consideration.

Mr. MURPHY: Most of the newspapers are sent there for nothing.

Mr. LENNON: He had not intended to speak, because the vote was such a modest one, and was in every way justified. He thought the Chief Secretary went too far in criticising the Library Committee in connection with the Parliamentary Library.

The PREMIER: I allow that it is unwise to make comparisons.

Mr. LENNON: He was going to point out that the committee of the Parliamentary Library did not want to buy books of so wide a range as were looked for in a public library, and when they were restricted in the selection in that way it was naturally more costly. The Library Committee was rushed with offers from publishers of new books, and they were generally first in the field to satisfy the desires of hon. members to procure these books as soon as they were issued. As the Premier was good enough to admit that comparisons were odious, he had nothing further to say.

Mr. FORSYTH: He understood that the books for the Parliamentary Library were selected by a committee in London, and he thought their services might be utilised in selecting books also for the Public Library. The committee in London would be of great assistance to the Public Library if they selected their books for them, and they would be able to get the best class of books sent out for the library. Seeing that it would be such a great advantage to the Public Library, and as it would not cost the Government any more, he hoped they would do something in that direction.

Mr. MAY: The Premier made a statement with regard to the Parliamentary Library which he had practically withdrawn. As a member of the Library Committee for over two years he could say that the Parliamentary Library was just what hon. members made it. Members of the committee asked members for recommendations, and those recommendations were brought before the committee at the monthly meetings. The President of the Legislative Council presided at the meeting, and they had the assistance of the Speaker. They went fully into every recommendation for new books, and decided what books to purchase by a special vote of the committee. If the library was not what it should be according to the ideas of members of the House, then there were only themselves to

[Hon. D. F. Denham.]

blame for not placing before the Library Committee the suggestions which they wished to have carried out.

Mr. FOLEY: He noticed that this institution was called the "Public Library of Queensland." He had never been in the place, and did not know what it was like.

Mr. GRANT: Go and have a look at it.

Mr. FOLEY: He would do so. On making inquiries, he found there was no provision for lending books out, and the fact of not lending out books was one of the greatest weaknesses of a public library. Any knowledge he possessed he had obtained by means of a public library from which he was able to take books home. In the old country there were public libraries controlled by the municipal authorities; and people were allowed to take books home. In the town where he lived, a person paid a penny for a card, which must be signed by two householders, who guaranteed the return of the book lent. In that way he was able to obtain all the works of Dickens, Scott, and Marryat. He might say that he obtained all his information in the school of adversity and the public library. If young fellows in Brisbane had the opportunity of taking out books and reading them at home it would be the means of keeping them away from billiard-rooms and such places.

Mr. GRANT: What is wrong with billiard-rooms?

Mr. FOLEY: He had never played billiards himself; but he thought time would be better occupied in reading good books than in playing billiards and smoking cigarettes.

Mr. FIDELLY: If the hon. member for Mundubberra went to the Public Library, he would find that it was not exactly the sort of library which existed in England as a lending library. A lending library should be provided and controlled by the municipal authorities; it was sufficient for the State to provide a central library where books of reference could be consulted. He rose particularly to point out that of the amount appropriated last year the sum of £353 was left over; and he was of opinion that the gentlemen who selected the literature for the library should have instructions to appropriate the full amount voted.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): If there was one thing more than another which made a public library of benefit to the community it was the lending out of books, so that people might read them at home. If that could be done in large centres in the old country, he did not see why fairly-well equipped lending libraries could not be established in the large centres of population in Queensland.

Mr. FIDELLY: Are those libraries in the old country established by the municipalities or by the Government?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: In some cases by the municipalities; in other cases by private bequests. In his own town the library was established by legacies left by one individual. Its operations extended to the outside districts, and it was now serving a population of 200,000 or 300,000. His experience was that infinitely more benefit was to be derived

from taking out books and reading them at home than by reading them either in the Public Library or in the Parliamentary Library.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Members opposite seemed to forget that this was the "Public Library of Queensland," and not the "Public Library of Brisbane." In the country districts they established schools of arts in various towns, with which were connected lending libraries; and there was nothing to prevent the Brisbane people from doing exactly the same thing.

Mr. KIRWAN: They have schools of arts in Brisbane.

Mr. MORGAN: Exactly; and they could do all the lending that was necessary.

Mr. FOLEY: People have to pay a guinea a year.

Mr. MORGAN: If the people of Brisbane objected to paying a guinea a year, they had no more right to the free use of books in the Public Library of Queensland than any other town. If people wanted to take books home to read, the paltry amount of a guinea or half a guinea a year should not stop them, when they were prepared to spend a guinea in two or three weeks on amusements. The young men of Brisbane who wanted to consult books of reference had a great pull over the young men in the country by having access to this library. He did not object to that, but he objected to having a lending library established in Brisbane solely at the expense of the State.

Mr. CRAWFORD: While he recognised that this was called the "Public Library of Queensland," he was not satisfied that its benefits extended throughout the State. Some time ago in New South Wales, where a very large library existed in the metropolis, the benefits were extended to all country literary institutions—mechanics' institutes and schools of arts—by lending collections of books on proper conditions as to their being well kept, and returned at the end of a year or eighteen months. Such a system could be inaugurated here, so that the people of the State, and not merely the people of Brisbane, might get the benefit of this Public Library of Queensland. It would be very helpful to them, because it was not to be expected that the country institutions, especially in the smaller towns, could go to the expense of buying the very valuable books they had in the Brisbane library. If a lending system were adopted it would extend the utility of the Brisbane library throughout the State. Although there was a large public library in Sydney, there was also a large lending branch in connection with it—a lending branch which had its habitat in the Victoria Markets. All descriptions of literature were kept there, and the only condition required to become a borrower from it was a reference as to character—which was perfectly reasonable. He thought that in those directions the Public Library of Queensland could be made much more useful and better known to the people generally, instead of its use being reserved exclusively for the people of Brisbane. He could speak with some degree of experience concerning the Brisbane Public Library, because of all the members of the House, he doubted if there was one who attended it more regularly than he did. The library was well arranged, and he could say that the books were remarkably up to date, which was as

it should be in connection with any library. The several defects, however, that had been pointed out might well be remedied, and if they were, it would be to the benefit of the library and of the public at large. The library would be of much more use to the public of Brisbane and its suburbs if a lending branch were attached to it. Of course, there would have to be a duplication of books, but the matter of the additional expense could be gone into before the Estimates for the next financial year were prepared and submitted to the House.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN thought the suggestion of the hon. member who had just sat down was a good one. He believed the Rockhampton School of Arts had already adopted a similar system and sent books to the Western districts. That was an ordinary school of arts that did not get the whole of its finances from the State. However, he did not begrudge the small amount of £1,100 that was spent annually on the Brisbane Public Library, but he pointed out that the institution was of little real value to anyone living 5 or 6 miles away from the town. Such people could not come into town for the purpose of perusing a book, and they had not the advantage of taking any of the books home. Such a privilege should be incorporated in the conditions governing the library. In the old country, when the Library Act came into force, it was of great assistance to the working classes of Great Britain generally, and if the Government of the State were to bring in some scheme on somewhat similar lines it would be far better for the little towns than the present school of arts system. A coterie usually got possession of the school of arts, and it was not popular with the working classes. The working classes generally kept away from schools of arts, and if the Government brought in a scheme to compel local authorities to create libraries for the people, it would be doing a good thing. Such libraries could be established and maintained by the municipalities striking a rate. In the town he had come from in the old country the library had been kept going by the municipality striking a rate of a farthing in the pound. As far as the Brisbane Public Library was concerned, it only existed for the benefit of a few people in Brisbane, and it was of no service to the residents of, say, Taringa, or even South Brisbane. It was only of use to those who lived in the immediate vicinity of the library. There was no antagonism on his side to the vote, but he hoped the Government would see its way to extend the system so as to permit the Public Library of Queensland becoming of more service to the people of the State, and, to attain that end, it could not do better than establish a lending branch.

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD.

The PREMIER moved that £1,840 be granted for "Public Service Board." The number of officers for the current year was one more than had been asked for last year. There was one additional typist and one addition to the relieving staff. The relieving staff was a very useful branch of the public service. Formerly it had been a common thing to have supernumeraries, but now when a department was short of an officer by reason of one of its regular hands being absent through sickness or on leave, the matter was

Hon. D. F. Denham.]

represented to Mr. Madsen, the secretary of the board, who was able to send around an officer who was able to efficiently carry out the work that was required. So they were therefore quite right in slightly building up the relieving staff. Although they were not asking for what had been called a chief clerk, they had increased the relieving staff, and, in the matter of salaries, there had been increases ranging from £10 to £20 to the various officers. In reply to certain questions put by the hon. member for Rockhampton last Friday, he had stated that the information the hon. member required would take a considerable time to compile, but that he would endeavour to have it ready for the Committee when the Public Service Board vote was under discussion. As the manner in which the first question was framed seemed to indicate that the hon. member required the information to apply to every new member of the public service, from, say, the head of the Health Department to a cleaner in the public service, he would like the hon. member to state whether he was to interpret his question literally. If his answer were in the affirmative, he could only tell him that it would take weeks to compile the information, and would require a considerable outlay of money. If, however, as his second question appeared to imply, the hon. member desired information only respecting officers that came under the provisions of the Public Service Act, he could tell him that the number of new appointments made during the previous three years was 169, with salaries aggregating £22,489, or £133 per head. Of those 169 officers the great majority had passed the public service examination, the only exceptions being those admitted on the special certificate required by the Act, so that all the positions were filled in accordance with law. He hoped that the information that he had given was what the hon. member for Rockhampton desired.

Mr. ADAMSON: Is it true that those who now pass the Queensland junior will be eligible for the public service?

The PREMIER: Those who passed the Queensland junior would now be eligible for entrance to the public service of Queensland just the same as if they had passed the public service examination.

Mr. FIEHELLY: Does not that interfere with the age limit?

The PREMIER: Not so far as the junior examination was concerned. A request had been made by one of the heads of the grammar schools—he thought it was the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School—that those who had passed the senior examination should be eligible for admission to the service. In some cases, however, those who had passed the senior would be over age, and, assuming they were not over age, some of those who might enter would be receiving a salary which would hardly be compatible with their age.

Mr. FIEHELLY: Say a person of twenty passes the junior, would he be eligible?

The PREMIER: He must be subject to the age qualification. The junior candidates were generally about fifteen, but to pass the senior frequently took a student another three years' course of instruction. They did not accept the senior qualifications, because the age was generally greater than it should be for boys entering the public service. The

amount down for "Contingencies" (£150) was the same as for last year, when it had been found that the amount allotted was sufficient.

Mr. LENNON: Is there any record of the officers who have been appointed to the service under a special certificate?

The PREMIER: There had been very few officers so appointed, because the Under Secretary and Minister had to sign a document that there was no one in the service who was capable of filling the position—which was a stiff proposition. The officers who had been so appointed were chiefly in the professional branch—draftsmen and so forth.

Mr. FIEHELLY: Very often in the political arena.

The PREMIER: The political aspect could not enter into the question at all, and it would be a very sad thing if it did. Persons could only enter the public service by public examination, or upon a certificate that there was no one available in the service who could fill a position which was vacant. He could probably obtain a list of those who had been appointed under the second heading, and of the departments to which they had been appointed. He thought, however, that it could be safely said that it would be found upon investigation that the political element did not enter into the matter at all. If any members wanted any information on any specific subjects he would be most happy to furnish it. It would be observed that the secretary's report for the late year was much fuller than usual, and in the tables that had been furnished anyone who perused the report would find practically all the information he could desire in connection with the conduct of the public service of Queensland. He begged to move the vote.

Mr. FIEHELLY would like the Premier to give some further information with regard to entrance to the service. The hon. gentleman said those who passed the Junior University examination would be eligible.

The PREMIER: That is the new regulation.

Mr. FIEHELLY: If the number was much greater than the vacancies, how would they select the candidates, and what ratio of boys and girls? He would also like an expression of opinion as to whether the [5.30 p.m.] Junior University examination was considered a sufficiently wide examination for those about to enter the service. It was a totally different examination to the old civil service examination, and if the old examination was a suitable test, all he could say was that the Junior University examination was not a suitable test. He would like an expression of opinion from those responsible for the change.

The PREMIER: On page 9 of the report of the Public Service Board which was issued a few weeks ago, hon. members would see a list of the special appointments made, and if they looked through that list they would see there was no chance whatever for the political element to come in. There was an engineer appointed to the "John Douglas" and one to the "Otter."

Mr. FIEHELLY: I was referring to the Land Court judge.

The PREMIER: That was a different matter. Then, again, the age had been referred to. The age fixed by the public service regulation was from fifteen to twenty-two

[Hon. D. F. Denham.]

years, and it frequently happened that youths were considerably over twenty before they passed the University Senior examination. Another matter on which information was required was with regard to how many girls were required this time and how many boys. There were vacancies for twelve girls and sixty boys. As to how they got appointments, those who got the highest percentage of marks at the junior examination would get the first appointment. He wished they could find openings for more girls than they had at present.

Mr. KIRWAN: They seem to top the ladder every time.

The PREMIER: They were very brainy, but it was very difficult to move them about the same as youths were moved.

Mr. ADAMSON: I suppose we can take it for granted that the Queensland junior examination is quite as high as the old civil service examination?

The PREMIER: It was on a parity with it, at least. Speaking from his experience, the girls in the public service were a very bright lot, and he wished he could find room for more, but it was no use to raise the hopes of twenty-four girls when they had no room for them.

Mr. FIDELLY: Raise the salaries of the junior male officers and introduce a minimum, and then you will give hope to the girls. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: He was afraid the time would not be very remote before all the positions were filled by girls.

Mr. LENNON was glad the Premier had given so much information of an interesting character, and of course hon. members accepted the hon. gentleman's assurance about the non-political character of appointments to the public service. While he did not want to cast any doubt on the hon. gentleman's statement in that regard, he considered that until they had a properly constituted Public Service Board it could not be removed from the political taint likely to be attached to it. He would call attention to the figures quoted by the hon. gentleman as to the new appointments of classified officers in three years, totalling 169, involving an expenditure of about £22,439 per annum. It seemed to him that the appointment of fifty-six classified officers annually was very progressive, and in passing through the various Government departments he had always been struck with the large number of officers acting the part merely of messengers. There seemed to be too many officers in the various public departments in Brisbane. He would call attention to page 13 of the report of the Public Service Board dealing with the classification of the whole of the public service and the average salary, and he would call attention to the fact that the average salary paid to public servants in all departments was £229 9s. per annum, but in the case of officers of the Department of Public Instruction it dropped to £154 8s. per annum. That was not a desirable state of things. Whatever might be said of the general officers of the public service of Queensland, they were fairly well paid, but it was a very great reflection on Queensland that the teachers should suffer such a disadvantage as compared with the ordinary officers of the public service. The teachers were performing a noble work. It was a life of great drudgery, and they should receive a higher salary.

Mr. BERTRAM (*Maree*) said the Government would be well advised to seriously consider the remarks of the hon. member for Herbert regarding the appointment of a public service commissioner. In the interests of the public servants, and in the interests of the State, it would be a good thing to abolish the Public Service Board and appoint a public service commissioner. If that were done a very great economy could be effected in the public service.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You believe he would reduce the number of public servants?

Mr. BERTRAM: That could be done if the public service commissioner had backbone enough to do his duty. He hoped that matter would not be lost sight of.

Mr. FIDELLY could not agree with the hon. member for Maree with regard to the appointment of a public service commissioner. His experience of gentlemen in that position was that they set up an entirely new style of their own. Although theoretically it sounded well enough, he had no time at all for a public service commissioner, as he was a non-producer and entirely superfluous. A public service commissioner served no purpose whatsoever, and it became another branch more like the High Court or like Parliament, than any other power he could mention. What he wanted to emphasise in connection with the Public Service Board vote was the advisability of the Premier to introduce a minimum wage in the public service and to see that each youth or girl over twenty-one years of age received a living wage. Hon. members had talked about food prices and other problems, and he thought the Government should endeavour to deal with such an important question as the underpayment of the lower strata of public servants. He did not hold a brief for the public servants, but he knew how hard it was for a man getting £100 a year to live in comfort, and how useless it was for him to ever hope of getting married. The Premier spoke about having a monopoly of girls. If that ever came about it would be through the bad system. The best thing to prevent girls from entering into the economical and industrial sphere was to pay the men well, as the girls would then marry them. The Secretary for Agriculture, he was sure, had a good deal of sympathy for the under-paid public servants, especially as the hon. gentleman belonged to the most under-paid service in the world or in Australia at least. That was the Department of Public Instruction. He was sure the hon. gentleman would advocate a minimum wage throughout the service.

Mr. GRANT thought it was about time that they should discuss the advisableness of having a public service commissioner in place of the present Public Service Board. He spoke as an ex-public servant and as one who had experience of the present Public Service Board. Although he knew that the present board did their work conscientiously, still it was time there was an alteration made. Each Minister went to the meeting of the board knowing only the department over which he presided, and of course he always worked for the particular officers of that department. Ministers had no general knowledge of the whole public service, but if they had a public service commissioner he would have experience of the whole of the departments. The commissioner would know if there was a vacancy in Department B that Jones of Department C ought

Mr. Grant.]

to be the man to fill that position, whereas the Minister in charge of Department B defended some other man who was in the department. Taking the public service generally he thought they were favourable to the appointment of a public service commissioner. At every conference of the Public Service Association and Teachers' Association they advocated the appointment of a public service commissioner, because they knew where the shoe pinched. The present Public Service Board did their work honestly and well, but they had not got the time nor the knowledge that was necessary.

Mr. FIBELLY: You should have advocated that two or three months ago.

Mr. GRANT: How did the hon. member know that he did not do so?

The PREMIER: He always did so.

Mr. FIBELLY: I am glad to hear it

Mr. GRANT: When a Minister took office it frequently happened that he might be absent for weeks at a time in the North or West, and he had no knowledge of what was done during his absence.

Mr. HUNTER: He may be speaking at by-elections.

Mr. GRANT: Yes, like the hon. member was on Monday night at Maryborough. (Laughter.) He believed that the hon. member was trying to put in some effective work there. The Government should appoint a public service commissioner, pay fair salaries, and introduce a Public Service Superannuation Bill for the benefit of the public service. When a man in the service reached the age of seventy years he was turned adrift without any money whatever to support him in his declining years. A scheme had been prepared by Mr. Rendle which would stand actuarial investigation, and it was a very fair scheme indeed. A Minister of a department hesitated to get rid of a man who reached the retiring age on humanitarian grounds alone, as he knew that the officer had nothing to live on, but if a superannuation scheme were adopted, then when a public servant reached the age when he had to retire he would be able to draw the pension to which he had contributed. He hoped the Government would consider both schemes. There were any amount of public servants in the service at the present time who would admirably fill the position of public service commissioner. It would be invidious to mention names, but one name he did mention was that of the Under Secretary of the Education Department over which he (Mr. Grant) recently presided.

Mr. FIBELLY: That proves that a Minister barracks for his friends.

Mr. GRANT: He did not know if Mr. Story would take the position. He was an honest, capable, straightforward man with enthusiasm for his profession, and he did his work fearlessly and well.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRANT: He knew that the public service would have confidence in him if he were appointed as a public service commissioner, although, of course, he did not know if that gentleman would accept it. He hoped the Government would consider those matters.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): While he agreed that the Under Secretary for Education was [Mr. Grant.

the best man that could be found for that position, he would not like to see him appointed public service commissioner. (Hear, hear!) That gentleman knew the Education Department well, and it would be hard to fill his place. If they wanted to improve on the present Public Service Board they might allow the Under Secretaries to have full control of their own departments. In all the industries carried on throughout the State a man was put in charge, and he had to make the business a success one way or the other, and if he could not do that someone else was put on in his place. He did not think that anybody was more competent than the Under Secretary and the Minister in charge of a department to make promotions. He (Mr. White) did not believe in a minimum wage, but he believed in paying a man just what he was worth. Neither did he believe in seniority. He believed that the public service of Queensland was as capable and honest and well administered as any service on the face of God's earth, but at the same time he thought that economy should be effected in several departments. When he went into a Government department and saw the number of clerks and typewriters for the amount of business that was being done he thought that these departments could be run much more economically for the benefit of the country. He did not wish to mention any names, but he could do so if necessary. It seemed that the higher a man got in the public service the less he wanted to do. (Laughter.)

Mr. FIBELLY: And the more pay he wants.

Mr. KIRWAN: That does not apply to the poor man underneath.

Mr. WHITE: The man underneath would do just the same when he rose to a higher position. The public service offered opportunities for every man, and the hon. member for Brisbane himself, who was recently in a subordinate position, was now one of the legislators of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) It showed how men with ability could come forward. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) He did not wish to see a public service commissioner appointed with all the extra expense. It should be left to the Under Secretaries themselves, and they would be able to save a good deal of the State's money. They could then abolish the Public Service Board and save a few thousands of pounds, and it would be all the better for Queensland. He hoped they would not appoint Mr. Story as public service commissioner as they wanted him in the Education Department.

Mr. HUNTER (*Meranoa*): There was a good deal of difference of opinion as to the desire of having a commissioner appointed. The old system of Public Service Board was very unsatisfactory, and even the present system was not as satisfactory as one would wish to see, but until they got something better they should not run into a new system without making full inquiry into it. He suggested that the Government should appoint half a dozen members of the Legislative Assembly to go into the question of appointing a Public Service Board or not, and allow them to present a report to the House. There was no doubt there was need for a change in the present system. The hon. member for Musgrave said there were a number of young fellows in the service who were not worth the money they were getting.

Mr. WHITE: I did not say so.

Mr. HUNTER: He understood the hon. gentleman to say that, and he was going to say that those men had no business there.

Mr. GEANT: It is a difficult matter to get him out of the public service once he gets in, no matter how incapable he is.

Mr. HUNTER: They had a number of young men in the service who were not getting sufficient salary to keep them, and for that reason it was better that the public service should be put on a very much better footing than it was at present so that increases could come automatically without giving any favouritism to any officer. If it were possible for Under Secretaries to give sufficient time they could not have anything much better than the present Public Service Board, because the great majority of the Under Secretaries were very competent and worthy men.

Mr. LENNON: The Public Service Board is the Cabinet.

Mr. HUNTER: He knew that, but they were advised by the Under Secretaries, and the Under Secretaries had a good deal to do with what happened at the Public Service Board. While the Ministers were primarily the Public Service Board, he took it that the Under Secretaries were their advisers, and if sufficient time were given he was satisfied that the position of the public service would be perfectly satisfactory. Neither the Ministers nor the Under Secretaries were able to give the attention to the matter that it deserved. It was an increasing quantity, and greater demands were being made upon the Government, and something should be done. The present system was better than the previous system, and he would not like to see any change until some substantial reason was given for a change. He admitted Mr. Story was a very capable man in the Education Department, but he would not like to see him shifted to any other position. He hoped the Government would allow half a dozen members to make a report on the matter.

Mr. KIRWAN: From the discussion it looked as if the proposal to change the present Public Service Board was something new. The other evening the Premier promised that he would consider the matter with his colleagues during the recess and would have something to lay before the House next session. It was too late in the session to go into the question this year. He did not know that it would be wise to appoint a public service commissioner. The present system was certainly not as good as it might be, but it was an improvement on the old system. They generally recognised that there was no one so competent to make recommendations as the Under Secretaries of the particular department. Ministers came and Ministers went, but the Under Secretaries generally remained there. The Under Secretary had got a good all-round knowledge of his department, and if an Under Secretary made a recommendation to either the Hon. the Treasurer or the Hon. the Premier, neither of those Ministers could very well refuse to accept the recommendation. The hon. member for Maranoa suggested that the Hon. the Premier

[7 p.m.] should appoint a small Select Committee to go into the question of constituting a new Public Service Board, and to suggest a better system of dealing with the public service than the existing system. He would only add that

he hoped when the question of salaries was next considered, instead of raising salaries of £250 and £300 by £20 and £40, those increases would be given to the men getting only £100 and £110.

Mr. MAY: In the early part of the session he brought forward a motion for giving to all public servants over twenty-one years of age—male and female—after three years' service, a minimum salary of £110 a year. He advocated that in a motion he introduced last session also, and would continue to bring it forward every session as long as he was in Parliament. Some of the lady typists had been in the service a great many years, and were not receiving anything like the emoluments they should receive. It was said that kissing went by favour. He did not know whether the Under Secretary had a speciality in that direction; but the fact remained that whilst some of the ladies received increases, other were left lamentably behind. He hoped the Public Service Board would take into consideration every individual case. What was wanted was a board which was not exactly the Cabinet, but a board that would give attention to every individual case.

Question put and passed.

STEAMER "LUCINDA."

The PREMIER moved that £2,610 be granted for the steamer "Lucinda." The sum asked for was precisely the same as the amount voted last year, which was found sufficient.

Mr. FOLEY would like to see some alteration in the pay of seamen. Men had been on the boat for many years at the same salary.

The PREMIER: They never want to leave it.

Mr. FOLEY: They were not getting anything like the wages of seamen on the coast. A seaman's wages on the coast combined with his overtime, would double the amount paid to a seaman on the "Lucinda." One of the seamen on the "Lucinda" had held the same position twenty-four years, and he must have proved himself a good man or he would not have been allowed to remain on the boat. As to the men not wanting to leave, if a man asked for a rise, he might have to go against his will. For a number of years he had been agent in Queensland for seamen; and had done his best for the men working on the coast; and he thought it his duty to try and get better pay for the men on the "Lucinda."

Mr. FORSYTH: What do you think would be a fair amount?

Mr. FOLEY: There were two men down at £123 a year.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth award for eight hours' work a day is £72 a year, plus food.

Mr. FOLEY: These men had to go home at night and find their own food. He thought the least they should get was £10 a month and food.

Mr. BERTRAM: He did not wish to occupy time in discussing what might appear to be a trivial matter; but he thought the men referred to by the hon. member for Mundingburra were deserving of better pay.

Mr. Bertram.]

The Commonwealth award was for an eight-hour day, rations included; but these men did not get rations, nor were they paid overtime.

The PREMIER: They do not work anything like eight hours a day. I do not suppose it averages half that time.

Mr. BERTRAM: He was surprised to learn that they did not work eight hours a day on the average. During a great portion of the year they were down the bay practically every day. They went down three or four days in the week with school children.

The PREMIER: Last year the "Lucinda" left the wharf on 119 days, or about one-third of the whole year.

Mr. BERTRAM: Whether they left the wharf or not the men had to be there; and on the days when the boat went down the river with school children there was a great deal of work to be done after the boat had returned to the wharf. The men worked exceedingly long hours during the summer months when the boat went to the bay; and he did not think £123 a year was sufficient.

Mr. MAY: It was considered a triviality to discuss the question of increasing the salary of the poorly-paid man to a higher rate; but when it was a question of increasing the salary of a man receiving £900 or £1,000 a year it was considered a matter of importance. Every man should be taken on his merits; and consideration should also be given to the duties he had to perform. It was said that the "Lucinda" only went down the bay 119 times last year; and it was to be assumed she returned to the wharf the same number of times, so that there followed the work consequent on such returns. The "Lucinda" was frequently used for Cabinet excursions, so that the members of the crew had to be always ready to be called upon at a moment's notice. He thought the wages of the seamen might very well be increased from £123 to £156 per annum. The cost of living had been materially increased during the past few years, and the men he had mentioned were undoubtedly entitled to something that would help them to meet that increased cost. There was no class in the community who were deserving of greater encouragement than our seamen, and he hoped the Premier would see his way to give the seamen employed on the "Lucinda" some better recognition.

Question put and passed.

THURSDAY ISLAND.

The PREMIER moved that £991 be granted for "Thursday Island." During the late year the old Government Resident, an esteemed officer, had passed away, and had been replaced by Mr. Lee-Bryce, who had discharged his duties in a very efficient manner. There was an increase in the vote of £20, the signalman having had his salary increased by that amount. The Government Resident got £48 for extra cost of living, and the carpenter and the signalman each drew 2s. a day on account of extra cost of living. Formerly the "John Douglas" had been controlled by the Government Resident, but it had now been transferred to the Treasury Department, and was located at Cooktown. They were awaiting advices from the Government Resident as to what type of boat would be suitable for his work; but so far the information was not to hand, and

[Mr. Bertram.

consequently they had not been able to ask for any provision. When the information desired was available, they would take the necessary action to meet the Government Resident's requirements, for it was considered desirable that the Government Resident should have a boat to enable him to discharge his duties.

Mr. FORSYTH: In the Marine Estimates the provision for Cooktown had been increased from £1,728 to £1,834; the item for the "John Douglas" had been increased from £1,192 to £1,268, and the cost of the pilot station at Cooktown had been included in the £1,834 provided for the current year. He presumed the pilot station was for Cooktown. Altogether, therefore, the "John Douglas" was to cost £1,268. Again, on page 58 of the Estimates, under the heading of "General Contingencies" for buoys and the maintenance of certain steamers, including the "John Douglas," the vote had been increased from £1,600 to £1,750, an increase of £150. He would like some explanation of the figures in connection with the "John Douglas."

The PREMIER explained that the extra cost of living and incidentals had to be considered in connection with the total annual cost of the "John Douglas," which had been transferred to the Treasury Department. The Harbour-master, Captain Mackay, had been requiring for some considerable time past a boat of the type of the "John Douglas," and he had advocated that one should be placed at Cooktown. The "John Douglas" was not a very fine boat or a very fast one, and they had in contemplation the putting of bigger boiler power in her and generally of giving her better machinery. It was considered, however, unwise to make any big alterations, and as it was known she would serve the purposes of the Treasury Department, in connection with coastal lights and so on, she had accordingly been transferred to that department. They intended, however, to give the Government Resident a boat to enable him to discharge the duties appertaining to his office.

Mr. FIDELLY: What sort of boat? A motor boat, or some obsolete old steamer?

The PREMIER: The kind of boat had not yet been decided.

Mr. MAY said they had before them a vote of £991, and yet they were talking in thousands, which all came of transferring things from one department to another. Such transfers fogged ordinary members who were not able to deal with figures in the manner the hon. member for Murrumbidgee was.

Mr. FORSYTH: The appropriation for the "John Douglas" for 1911-12 was £1,192, and that for the current year was £1,268. Then, again, there was no mention in the vote of incidentals or extra cost of living, and he thought it would be wise

[7.30 p.m.] to put down on the Estimates the actual cost of the "John Douglas" for to say that that boat was only going to cost £1,268 was misleading. The incidentals and the extra cost of living should be put down under the head "John Douglas," and then they would have a correct estimate of what that boat was going to cost.

Mr. FIDELLY asked whether it was absolutely necessary that such obsolete steamers as the "John Douglas" should be used in the North?

The PREMIER: Captain Mackay says she is suitable for the work she is doing.

Mr. FIDELLY: The question was: Was the work worth the expense? It was quite possible a motor-launch might be run much more cheaply, and would do the work just as effectively.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out that the vote for the "John Douglas" will come on later.

Mr. FIDELLY: £971 was voted last year, and the expenditure was over £3,000.

The PREMIER: Much more was asked for last year.

Mr. FIDELLY: He would ask the Premier's consideration to that matter in relation to all obsolete steamers. They should all be scrapped.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The PREMIER moved that £48,384 be granted for "Miscellaneous Services." The item asked for in respect of the subsidy to the Queensland line of steamers for a four-weekly service via Torres Strait, was the same as last year. It cost about £3,080 a trip. With regard to advertising the State, they were asking for £2,000 less than was voted last year. Last year they spent a little under £3,000, and in analysing the numerous items he found the amount paid to the Government Printer for printing pamphlets and so forth was about half the total, or, to be correct, they paid him £2,564 2s. 5d. By keeping on the same course that he had followed during the last two months in respect of advertising generally, he would not nearly use the sum now asked for. A lesser sum by £250 was asked for the Queensland Art Gallery.

Mr. MAY: Does that include the cost of the pictures purchased recently?

The PREMIER: No; there would be a special vote for that. Last year the Art Gallery procured two very nice pictures at very much below their real intrinsic value. There was a special item in connection with the Royal Commission on the Meat Industry. He thought £1,500 would be sufficient to meet requirements in that connection, and he hoped when they got the report that it would be well worth the money spent on it.

Mr. LENNON would like the Premier to give some information as to how long the contract with regard to the Queensland line of steamers would last. There was a good deal of discussion in the House when the contract was entered into, and it was pointed out that the service would be useless unless the steamers went back via Torres Strait, and an additional subsidy was paid to induce the steamers to go back the same route. He would like the Premier to state whether that had been satisfactory, as it would be a guide in future as to whether they were really getting value for the money. With regard to the advertising of the State, £6,000 was asked for this year, as against £8,000 voted last year, but, in view of the

statements recently made by the Premier about the rush of people to Queensland, and the eager desire displayed by many people in the old country nowadays to come to Queensland in comparison with what was the case some years ago, the bulk of that sum might be saved, as £2,000 or £3,000 should be sufficient. In connection with the Royal Commission on the Meat Industry, he joined with the Premier in expressing the hope that it would be a success in every way. Judging by the reports which had appeared in the Press, the commission appeared to be discharging their duties with very great zeal, and they had pointed out very great abuses. Hon. members would bear in mind that in the early part of the session Opposition members had strongly advocated the establishment of abattoirs, not only in Brisbane, but in the chief centres of the State, and he ventured to predict that when they got the report of the Meat Commission that suggestion would be intensified, and that they would have a strong recommendation from the commission in favour of the establishment of abattoirs.

The PREMIER: The Government could denounce the contract with the British-India Company in three years, but the company could not denounce it under four years. They were really not paying any more for the steamers going up the coast, because previously there were only twelve boats a year, for which they paid £37,000, while now they were getting thirteen boats a year, for which they paid £40,084, which just about covered the dues charged in passing through the Suez Canal. The service was instituted for the benefit of North Queensland. Brisbane was the terminal port for many over-sea vessels, and the residents of North Queensland claimed that they were subjected to delay and extra charges through having no direct service. Then again, the service was valuable in connection with immigration, because, when the assisted immigrants came round the coast, there was a danger of them going ashore in Melbourne or Sydney and not returning to the boat. Now when they left the old land and came by the British-India Company's boats, the steamers delivered them at the port for which they had shipped. With regard to advertising, as he had already remarked, he quite anticipated keeping within the vote, as he was not advertising quite so largely as last year.

Mr. HARDACRE would like some information in regard to the subsidy of £40,084 for the four-weekly service via Torres Strait. That was a very large sum, and, while he admitted that they got a good deal of service rendered for the money, it was worthy of consideration whether, in addition to the service rendered, in regard to immigration and general advantages to the State—whether they should not insist, in connection with any renewal of the contract, in having some control over the freights.

The PREMIER: The freight is identically the same right through.

Mr. HARDACRE: He was very glad to hear that. He did not want it to be understood in any way that he was making an attack on the company, which was getting a very large subsidy, for the large increase in freights which had come about during the last year or so, but it was a matter of

Mr. Hardacre. |

such public importance that it occurred to him that while passing that vote they might get some information regarding the matter. He had been assured by merchants in Brisbane that within the last few years freights to Great Britain and back had considerably increased. He was shown the books of one merchant in Brisbane, which showed that there was something like a 37 per cent. increase in freights, on the same class of goods, to what was charged ten years ago. That was a matter of very great concern to the merchants of Queensland. He knew that all over the world freights were increasing, and only the other day he saw in one of the Sydney newspapers that American freights were going up. He also knew that there was a very large increase in the cost of building ships. It was a matter which was affecting the business of Queensland, and there was a good deal of antagonistic comment; whether justifiable or not he did not know, and for that reason he thought he would take the opportunity of seeing whether they could get some information as to whether the increase in freights was justifiable or not. He hoped the hon. member for Murrumba would give the Committee some information on the matter.

Mr. FORSYTH pointed out that this particular agreement was one of the best that the Government had ever entered into. It was quite true that in the early days the people of North Queensland complained most bitterly that they were neglected, because, when there was no subsidy, the vessels did not go through the Suez Canal owing to the heavy expense in connection with dues. He did not think the subsidy given by the Queensland Government more than paid the dues on going through the Suez Canal. Previous to the subsidy being paid the vessels preferred to go round the Cape of Good Hope, and the first port of call was Fremantle, and from there the steamers went to Melbourne and then on to Sydney, and by the time the goods got to North Queensland anyone who understood anything about it at all would know the enormous delay caused through Brisbane being the last port of call. Another grievance was in connection with the freights that the merchants of North Queensland had to pay. There was a most peculiar arrangement at first under which the people of North Queensland had to pay more for their freights than the people of Brisbane. Brisbane was the last port of call, and yet the freights were cheaper than to any other ports on the Queensland coast. It was hardly right that the ports of North Queensland should be penalised to pay a much higher rate, and he suggested to Mr. Kidston to put a clause in the agreement so that the people in the North would not have to pay more than Brisbane. That clause was put into the agreement, and the freights were now the same from any port of Queensland to London. There was also a clause in the agreement which provided that the vessels would call at any port along the coast which would guarantee 150 tons of cargo. He thought that was a splendid arrangement and was far better than bringing the goods to Brisbane and then transshipping them back to the port of destination by one of the coastal steamers. The State saved a considerable amount of money by that arrangement, as the goods were now delivered at the ports for which they were intended, and there was very little brought on to Bris-

bane and transhipped back again. So long as the steamer could get 150 tons of cargo it would call at any port, and that was a great thing for Queensland. He was surprised that the ports of Queensland did not take more advantage of it, because it did not matter how the cargo was made up; it could be given by fifty men who would have 3 tons of cargo each.

Mr. LENNON: What about the return trips?

Mr. FORSYTH: Most of the vessels went back via the Torres Strait route. A good many of them went to Sydney to fill up with cargo, and then went home via North Queensland. There was no trouble about the return trip when the wool season was on, as the steamers obtained sufficient cargo from the wool and ore. Of course most of the wool was brought to Brisbane for the Brisbane wool sales, but still a good portion of it was sent home by the British-India steamers. The agreement was also a splendid thing for Cairns, as there was so much Cairns loading to be obtained now that the vessels all called there. They frequently had 500 or 600 tons of cargo for Cairns, and as they went straight into the port it enabled the merchants to get their goods cheaper, and also enabled them to sell their goods cheaper to the people. They could not expect the vessels to go back empty, but whenever there was any cargo they always went back via North Queensland. With regard to the immigrants, it was much better for them to be landed at the particular port they were coming to—say Townsville, or Cairns, or anywhere else—rather than bring them on to Brisbane and send them back by a smaller vessel. He noticed that there was an item of £4,286 in connection with the arbitration expenses paid to the Acclimatisation Society. He would like the Premier to give some explanation about that.

The PREMIER: Under the terms of the agreement they paid to the Acclimatisation Society £3,835. Then they paid half the cost of the award amounting to £132 19s. 6d., counsel's fees £236 18s. 6d., and witnesses' expenses £81 7s. 6d., making a total of £4,265 5s. 6d. That was the portion of land that they had since leased to the National Association. In reply to the hon. member for Herbert, he could tell him that on three occasions in the last twelve months the boats had not returned to London via North Queensland; but before pursuing their journey South they got the consent of the Government so to do, and before the Government gave that consent they ascertained that no freights were possible from any port in North Queensland. The greatest satisfaction was obtained from the company, as they met the Government in every possible way. Whilst there was an amount of £40,084 down for subsidy to the line of steamers he would point out that the Government gained £10,000 in respect of immigrants. They were paying the company £3,900 roughly for 300 immigrants, which was much less than other ships were now demanding.

Mr. FORSYTH: What is the contract price?

The PREMIER: £12 18s. per adult; so they saved money there. They also saved money through not having to pay for the transfer of passengers at Brisbane and then sending them up to Northern ports. When the vessel did not call at Mackay and they had to pay for the tranship of the passengers at Townsville, it cost them another

[Mr. Hardacre.

£180 to send them on to Mackay. Now that the vessels called at all the ports, the Government saved all these transfer charges. He understood that the company were now building some new boats for the service, and he hoped that it would be largely availed of as a passenger service coming down this coast. Visitors from England arriving in Australia between April and August could not do better than take the British-India boats as in coming down the North coast of Queensland they would get all the beauties of the scenery there.

Mr. HARDACRE: What control have you got over the freights?

The PREMIER: The Government have no control at all over the freights except that they must be uniform from each port.

Mr. LENNON: It is a great improvement.

The PREMIER: If the company charged £2 from Brisbane, they must also charge £2 from any other port. The Government could cancel the agreement in three years if they wished to—and he did not think they wished to—but the company could not cancel it under four years.

Mr. FIEHELLY considered that the subsidy to the line of steamers was not altogether a good principle. The Premier said that the freights were controlled by the Government.

The PREMIER: No; I said that the freights must be uniform all along the coast.

Mr. FIEHELLY: He must have misunderstood the Premier. He thought that the freight to Cairns should be less than that to Brisbane, and it should be altered.

Mr. FORSYTH: You cannot do it.

Mr. FIEHELLY: No; the shipping ring was too strong.

The PREMIER: We cannot do anything now, as the arrangement must last for three years.

Mr. FIEHELLY: He knew that nothing that he could say could alter the arrangement for three years, but it was a pity that the administrators of the State did not endeavour to get a fair rate fixed in the first place. The contract was a very substantial one, especially when they considered that immigrants were still brought to Brisbane, and transhipped to Northern ports in the coastal vessels. How long had the agreement been in force?

The PREMIER: Three years.

Mr. FIEHELLY: He had seen goods for Maryborough and Bundaberg amounting to more than 150 tons brought to Brisbane and transhipped to those places. That was not a fair thing, seeing that they paid the company £1,000 a week.

The PREMIER: Every time they were requested to discharge at Maryborough they never hesitated. All they ask for is prompt despatch.

Mr. FIEHELLY: The subsidised line of steamers was not such a boon to the North as was supposed.

Mr. MURPHY: It is better than having none at all.

Mr. FIEHELLY: Yes, it was better than the previous state of affairs, but it was not worth £1,000 a week. It was better for the consumer, but he was one who would like to see less material brought into Australia.

He considered that £1,000 a week was too much compensation for the trivial benefit

which the people of the North [8 p.m.] received. With respect to the sum of £6,000 for advertising the State, that should be divided between the Agent-General's Office and the Tourist Bureau. About £20,000 was spent last year in advertising the State, and that amount was separated under three different heads. He thought an endeavour should be made to bunch it under the two heads he had mentioned. It had been intimated by the Chief Secretary that he did not think it would be necessary to advertise so bountifully as had been done in the past; consequently he did not think the sum of £6,000, included in this vote, would be required.

Mr. ADAMSON: With regard to the accommodation provided for immigrants on these boats, particularly in regard to the food supplied, he understood there was an inquiry being held at present, and he would like to know whether immigrants were properly provided for by the company. Some of the immigrants landed in Rockhampton complained bitterly about the way in which they were treated on the steamers; and he hoped the Premier would see that everything necessary for the comfort of immigrants was provided.

The PREMIER: He could assure the hon. gentleman that this was a matter into which the closest investigation was always made. When the immigrants reached a port they were asked if they had any complaints to make; and if there was anything like a reasonable complaint, investigation was made. In the case of the "Roscommon," though the complaint made was regarded as a rather shadowy one, it was considered that it would be better to look into the matter. There was an error made by an officer in the old land over whom the Government had no control—namely, the Commonwealth officer, whose duty it was to pass the meat. Doubtless more would be heard about that. He had not seen the report of the police magistrate who inquired into the matter, but word had been passed to him that it had reached his office, and he understood that the magistrate completely exonerated the ship. Every reasonable care was taken; but sometimes when men and women got together in numbers on a vessel, they were likely to become irritable and fractious. When people who were used to plenty of work found themselves in idleness for some weeks, it was a case of "Satan finding mischief for idle hands to do." As he said before, anything like a reasonable complaint was fully investigated; and, on the whole, they had reason to congratulate themselves on the service.

At 8.6 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under Standing Order No. 11, I call upon the hon. member for East Toowoomba, Mr. Roberts, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. ROBERTS thereupon took the chair.

Mr. HUNTER: One item he would like to refer to particularly was the vote for the Royal Commission on the Meat Industry. He understood that this commission would shortly present a report, and he was anxious that the report should not be shelved. There was a long discussion on the Address in Reply with respect to the commission, and

Mr. Hunter.]

he believed that the result of its investigations would be good. He would like to see the duties of the commission somewhat extended, with a view of ascertaining the actual state of the meat trade. Recently it was publicly announced that an American beef trust had established itself in Brisbane, and to him that sounded rather ominous. He was afraid there was great danger of serious results, not only to the consumer, but also to the producer. He knew a number of prominent pastoralists who took the same aspect of the case. Something like three years ago, when speaking on the Financial Statement, he urged the Government to look into the matter of our meat supplies, also the treatment which producers were receiving from the packers and exporters of meat. He was of opinion that had the Government stepped in then, they would have prevented this American meat trust from establishing itself in Queensland. Some people regarded this as a very desirable thing; but they knew very well that this trust in America wiped out all competitors; and the small packing houses in Queensland would be compelled to play a very small part in the business. The trusts would simply pay their own prices for cattle and sheep.

Mr. TROUT: What will the other fellows be doing?

Mr. MORGAN: Half of them are buying at their own prices now.

Mr. HUNTER: It was because he knew three years ago something of the kind would happen that he suggested to the Government that they should become packers and agents for the producers. These trusts had only to get a footing; and when they did that the producer and the consumer alike would suffer. Whether the Government could do anything in the matter he did not know; it might be that the Federal Government would have to deal with the matter. At any rate, they should hear something from the commission on this important question. With regard to advertising the State, he agreed that the vote was too much split up. He was of opinion that the amounts for advertising should be submitted to the House in detail; and he intended to ask for a return showing the actual amount spent on advertising, and the newspapers to which amounts were paid. With regard to the subsidy for the Torres Strait service, he thought that as far as North Queensland was concerned it was deserving of the vote; and if there was one thing to the credit of the Government—and of past Governments—it was that they had endeavoured to deal fairly with the Northern ports, instead of concentrating everything in the capital, as was done in New South Wales. What he would like to see was better provision with regard to freights, because it was not right for Northern merchants to pay as much as Southern merchants by this service. He quite recognised that freights had gone up in Australia; but that had been the case all over the world. It must not be supposed, however, that this increase went into the pockets of the merchants. If the merchant had to pay more in the shape of freight, he simply passed it on, and the consumer was the one who had to suffer in the end. If it were possible in making contracts to limit charges for the time for which the contract was made, he thought it would be a good thing, because it would

[Mr. Hunter.

prevent companies from entering into a ring and raising prices. In America they were suffering from the very same cause—they could not get enough bottoms to carry their goods, notwithstanding the increase in the number of boats made from time to time. So far as the boats were concerned, he thought they were fortunate in having a contract which did not expire for three years.

Mr. MORGAN wished to refer to the commission that was inquiring into the question of the export of meat, and he felt that when the Meat Commission presented its report they would find that it had arrived at some very satisfactory conclusions. So far as the meat trust was concerned, the scare concerning it had originated in Victoria, and he was quite satisfied that, had the trust in question determined to spend its money in Melbourne and to erect very large freezing works in that city, we would have heard very little about the American meat trust. Because, however, the trust had come to Queensland, and was prepared to spend some hundreds of thousands of pounds in the neighbourhood of Brisbane, the *Argus* and other Melbourne papers had taken the matter up, with the result that there had been an outcry throughout the whole of Australia, and he was very sorry to see that there were people who professed to have an interest in Queensland who had taken up this cry that had originated in Victoria. Anyone who had cattle to sell knew what the position was, and that there had been during the past four or five years a meat trust in operation in Queensland.

Mr. HUNTER: You mean a meat ring.

Mr. MORGAN: He meant a meat trust.

Mr. HUNTER: There is a big difference between the two.

Mr. MORGAN: There might be "a distinction without a difference." The ring, or trust, regulated the prices, and that was what concerned the people in the country most. There were four or five firms in Queensland who regulated the prices for cattle. Assuming another firm stepped in, it would simply mean that there would be six instead of five. At present the stock-owners were under the thumb of the meat exporters, and anyone had only to pick up the newspapers to verify his contention. It would be seen that in the South the price for fat stock was 100 per cent. higher than in Queensland. It was a well-known fact that a Southern firm had endeavoured to secure 100 beasts a week in Queensland, but had been told that it could secure no shipping space. The very day that firm stopped buying in Brisbane the price fell down from £1 to 15s. per hundred, and that very day one local firm bought 500 head of cattle at 15s. per 100 lb. He asked why should they interfere with another firm that was coming to Queensland to spend thousands of pounds in the erection and maintenance of works, and which was going to compete against a ring already in existence.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is bigger than the whole lot here now.

Mr. MORGAN: It was alleged there was going to be a ring that would regulate prices, and that the big trust would eat up the little ring. They had been told by a man who owned large freezing works—by

John Cooke—that the graziers of Australia should “go down” on their knees and thank him because he had established freezing works in Queensland. They had been getting from 16s. to 20s. per 100 lb. for their beef, and now complaints were made simply because there was going to be another firm which would compete for their beef, and which would be able to take up what the other people could not use. Although there was a depression in Queensland, there were thousands of fat cattle which the owners could not sell, and they had to keep waiting in their turn for men to come and inspect them. If there was a freezing works which could freeze so many thousands a month, the graziers would not have to wait for someone to come along and lift their stock. The cattle would be lifted when they were ripe, instead of perhaps having to remain a couple of months and perhaps waste. That was the position they had been in for years, and the moment the man came along who was going to alter the situation a cry was raised by people and by a Press—that had never been favourable to Queensland—that there was a danger of a meat trust. Those men who had originated that cry had done their best in the past to prevent people from coming to Queensland. Unfortunately, there were people in Queensland ready to take up the bogey that had been raised. Australia was not a country that was likely to allow any trust to get out of hand. The graziers of Australia, if the occasion warranted, could form their own freezing works, and a trust could not operate in Australia like it could in America. In the first place, they did not have the railways, and then, again, it would not have the Government with it. There was no Government in Australia, whether it was Liberal or Labour, that was favourable to the trusts.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUNTER: You are favourable to the American meat trust now.

Mr. MORGAN: He was favourable to an American meat trust that was prepared to do legitimate business.

Mr. HUNTER: Did you ever know an American meat trust that did legitimate business?

Mr. MORGAN: Perhaps it might be possible to find the hon. member for Maranoa a party to the regulation of prices. He himself was always in favour of competition.

Mr. HUNTER: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. MORGAN: If he did not know, the hon. member for Maranoa could not teach him. He knew just as much about this particular question as the hon. member, although he did not claim to have a monopoly of the common sense of the House. When he did talk, however, he used his own brains. He did not use information supplied by other members and go back on his election pledges.

Mr. HUNTER: That is not the truth.

Mr. MORGAN: He could tell the hon. member for Maranoa something that he would not like. He would let the House judge whether what he said was true or not. He was satisfied that the Government would not do anything to prevent legitimate competition, no matter whether that competition

came from America or not. When it was found that it had actually become a trust, then it would be time for the Government to interfere, and not before.

Mr. HUNTER: They are a trust now.

Mr. GILDAY said he had had no desire to get up, but the remarks that had been made by the hon. member for Murilla had compelled him to do so. He recognised that the whole of the items under “Miscellaneous Services” had been well debated. With regard to the subsidy, he pointed out that if no provision had been made to compel the company that was receiving such subsidy to charge only reasonable amounts for the conveyance of goods from the old country to Australia, then they had left it open for the company to create a monopoly, in view of the fact that no other company could compete with them owing to the financial assistance given by the State to the subsidised company. However, the matter he specially wished to refer to was in regard to the item, “Expenses Royal Commission on Meat Industry.” That commission was a most important matter to the public of Queensland. When the ex-leader of the Opposition, Mr. Bowman, and he had spoken on the Address in Reply, they had specially dealt with the meat industry of Queensland, and their remarks on the subject of abattoirs and the inspection of meat had been ridiculed. The commission, however, had proved conclusively to the public that it was imperative that something should be done in the matter of meat inspection, and what had been said already on his side of the House had been justified by the evidence so far given before the commission; in fact, the information already gleaned by the commission had more than justified the action of the Premier in appointing it. A good deal had been said by the hon. member for Murilla with regard to the attitude of Victoria to the American meat trust. That trust was now in existence in Brisbane, controlled by Swift and Armour. The hon. member for Murilla had said that the Victorian Government would have been pleased if the trust had established their business in Melbourne. He therefore wished to tell the hon. member that the trust had endeavoured to establish its business in Victoria, but without success, for the reason that the Victorian Government would not allow it to do so.

Mr. MORGAN: Why?

Mr. GILDAY: He would tell the hon. member why. The trust then attempted to establish a place in New South Wales; but again without success. It therefore came to Queensland. The trust was in Brisbane at the present time, and whether it was going to make things worse or better for the stockraiser had to be proved. If, however, they went to America for information concerning trusts, they would find that the meat trust was absolutely one of the [8.30 p.m.] worst things that had got a grip of the country. They would find that the present company that was making a home for itself in Brisbane had a capital of about £40,000,000 and was in a position, so far as exporting was concerned, to wipe the present meatworks in Brisbane out of existence in three years if it so desired. They had done so in America, particularly in the Argentine.

Mr. Gilday.]

Mr. TROUT: Have the Government got control of the railways in America?

Mr. KIRWAN: What difference does that make?

The PREMIER: All the difference in the world.

Mr. GILDAY: He would admit that that was a great factor. While the people controlled the railways, they might be able to do something with regard to preventing the trust monopolising things as it did in America, but it was going to be detrimental both to the pastoralists and the people of Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: We are perfectly willing to give it a trial, at all events.

Mr. GILDAY: In America the trust was prepared to offer to the pastoralists a higher rate for cattle than what the local meat-works would give, and also to offer higher wages than the ruling rates paid prior to the time the trust was established. A few million pounds was nothing to them. They crushed everyone out, and solely controlled the market, and as a result the wage-earners and the markets were in the clutches of this great monopoly. It would be a good thing here for the pastoralists for two or three years, and also for the workers in that particular industry, but eventually it would be the means of raising the price of meat to such an exorbitant degree that it would be out of the reach of the people of the State. He did not think that that would be a good thing for Queensland. He felt certain that the statement of the hon. member for Murilla that there were thousands of head of fat cattle in Queensland that the buyers would not go out and inspect, was quite incorrect: he repudiated that statement.

Mr. MORGAN: I can prove it.

Mr. GILDAY: That statement was not right. He left it to the hon. member for Enoggera to say whether if there was fat cattle available in Queensland, they would not send a buyer anywhere within 1,500 miles to see whether they were fit for consumption. He did not see how a member who could make a statement of that kind could ridicule the hon. member for Maranoa.

Mr. MORGAN: I proved it in one of the offices this week.

Mr. GILDAY: He was quite prepared to state that they could get ten buyers tomorrow morning who would go out to inspect any number from 1,000 to 10,000 head of cattle, if they were fit for consumption. The argument of the hon. member for Murilla in support of the meat trust was absolutely ridiculous. He must confess that if the hon. member had half the ability of the hon. member for Maranoa, he might be an acquisition to this House. He hoped the Premier would go further in connection with the Meat Commission, and that by this time next year he would have a larger amount on the Estimates to warrant the erection of the most up-to-date abattoirs in the Commonwealth. If he did that it would be a good thing, and safeguard the health of the people.

Question put and passed.

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.
CHIEF OFFICE.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £4,000 be granted for "Chief Office." Hon.

{Mr. Gilday.

members would observe that there was an increase in the vote of £46. There were increases to the chief clerk of £40, to the record clerk £10, the accountant £50, the correspondent clerk £20, and £20 to Mr. Crosser. There was increased provision for the salary of R. H. Robinson, who was appointed at £125 vice S. J. Fuller deceased, who was in receipt of £90, and an increase to Robinson of £10, make a total of £40. There was an increase to Mr. G. Harrison of £10. There was a decrease, owing to the resignation of Mr. Holmes, which vacancy had not been filled, of £100; a decrease, owing to the transfer of Mr. McCallum, who was an inspector at £110, and the appointment of Mr. Hunter at £60, and an increase to Mr. Dickinson of £21. There was a decrease in the provision for a typist, who was paid a salary of £120, and who resigned, another typist being appointed at £70. There was an increase to the chief messenger and clerk, Mr. Mulcahy, of £15 a year, his salary being increased to £250, and increases to the assistant messenger and junior messenger, of £10 each. The increases came to £246, but with the decreases deducted therefrom, the net increase was £46. All the officers who had received these increases were deserving of them; their attention to duty in every way warranted the increase.

Mr. THEODORE: It had been the practice to have a general discussion on the first vote of a department, and he thought it would be profitable to the Committee to adopt that practice with regard to the Home Secretary's Department. On account of the Police Department being part of it, however, it might be as well if they refrained from discussing that department until they came to the specific vote. He had a good deal to say regarding the allocation of the increases to the police, but he would defer his remarks until they came to the vote for that specific purpose. He would like to call the attention of the Home Secretary to the necessity for some alteration in the law regarding electoral registration. He thought they might take the opportunity to make a few remarks on the subject here, so that the hon. member could give his opinion on the subject. He thought the House should have an opportunity during the session of discussing the question of an amending Act to make better provision for the enrolment of electors in Queensland, but it seemed they were not to have the opportunity. He would ask the Home Secretary to consider the necessity of making some better provision for the enrolment of intending electors. Did he not think it was necessary to have an alteration in regard to the qualification and disqualification of electors for the election of members to the State Legislature? Did he not think it was necessary to reduce the resident's qualification to make it more nearly conform to the qualification for the Commonwealth Parliament? He noticed, on comparing the figures as to the number of electors enrolled in the State and the number of electors enrolled in the Commonwealth, that in recent years there was a very big disparity. In 1910 and 1909 there were about 30,000 more on the Commonwealth roll than on the State roll, and that was brought about by the facility given to intending electors to enrol under the Commonwealth law, and the difficult process to enrol under the State law. There was a necessity to reduce the qualification in order that all persons who had been

resident in the State for three months should be able to vote, and the process of getting on the roll should be simplified. The present system had become obsolete, as there were other checks which were equally efficacious and much more satisfactory. He would call the attention of the Home Secretary also to the necessity for making some better provision in the matter of counting votes. The recent disclosures in connection with the Elections Tribunal had indicated the necessity of having an amendment of the law in that direction, and he would like some pronouncement from the Home Secretary regarding the matter. He was glad the hon. gentleman had given particulars of the increases in the chief office. A good many increases were provided, but those increases were warranted, as the increased cost of living affected members of the public service as well as the general community. He could not understand how it was that the department still described Mr. Mulcahy as a messenger. His duties were such that they merited a different description.

The HOME SECRETARY: The matters concerning which the deputy leader of the Opposition had spoken were already engaging the attention of the officers of the Home Department, who were entrusted with electoral matters. Those defects had certainly become very apparent during the past few weeks, and undoubtedly some of them required amending. He was not prepared to indicate what action would be taken in connection with the reduction of the residence qualification, but that matter would receive consideration. He would like to point out with regard to the disparity in the number of electors on the State roll and the number on the Commonwealth roll, that difference was more apparent than real, for the simple fact that in connection with the State electoral roll, the officers were very accurate indeed, and in case of the death of an elector, there were very few instances in which that elector was not marked off the roll, but it was a difficult thing indeed to get an elector off the Commonwealth roll, even after his death. He might mention the case of his own father, whose name was retained on the Commonwealth roll for two years after his death, and he took it that there were many other similar cases. He had just received information, which he had no doubt was authentic, as it came from the permanent head of the Home Department, that on the latest revision there was only a difference of 2,000 between the number on the State roll and the number on the Commonwealth roll. It did not matter on what side of the House they might be, those were matters that required attention, and he could give hon. members the assurance that all the matters referred to by the hon. member for Chillagoe would have consideration when the Bill was being drafted. As a matter of fact, it was being drafted already.

Mr. THEODORE: Will it be introduced this session?

The HOME SECRETARY: He did not think there was any chance of it being introduced this session, but it was being drafted, and all matters which had cropped up recently would receive serious consideration.

Mr. KIRWAN pointed out the necessity of having some amendment in the direction of absentee votes. It was a very strange

thing that when the primary votes were being counted it was absolutely necessary for the candidates, or their scrutineers, to be present, but in the counting of absentee votes such was not the case. Some returning officers, in order to avoid suspicion, had allowed the candidates or their representatives to be present at the counting of the absentee votes, but he was pointing the matter out because there was nothing to prevent an unscrupulous returning officer from destroying votes or doing anything he liked with them. There was nothing to prevent him opening such votes in the privacy of his own office, and such a state of affairs should not be allowed to exist for one solitary moment. All elections should be open and above board, and if it was necessary for primary votes to be counted in the presence of scrutineers, it was more necessary still that absentee votes should be dealt with in a similar manner, and that the candidates should be thoroughly satisfied that all votes were *bonâ fide*. With regard to the Principal Electoral Registrar, no more competent or upright gentleman could occupy that position, and the officials were all that could be desired. As one who had to do with those gentlemen, he might state that they were always ready to render every assistance to any elector who went there to get information, or to get his name on the roll.

Mr. MORGAN: He noticed that there was an increase of £62,000 in the amount placed on the Home Secretary's Estimates as compared with the amount voted last year. The principal increase in the vote was in connection with the police, and the increase there amounted to £37,000. It would give general satisfaction in the country to know that the lower-paid branch of the police service—the constables—were receiving an increase in their pay. Everyone must admit that the pay the police were receiving hitherto, considering that rates had gone up in other walks of life, was not a fair thing. He noticed that there was an increase of £200 for the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner received £800 now. While he was an exceptionally good officer, still, when they considered that the Estimates had been cut down owing to the depression and other things, it was strange that the Commissioner of Police should be set down to receive an extra £200.

Mr. KIRWAN: They should give it to the Under Secretary.

Mr. MORGAN: He thought the Under Secretary received enough, and he also thought the Commissioner of Police received a big enough salary. It was time that they considered the shareholders of Queensland. The shareholders were the ratepayers and taxpayers who always had to find the money, but they were like the shareholders in any ordinary business. They had been finding the money for years, and when there was an increase in business, it appeared to go to the employees, while the shareholders—the men who kept the business going and found the money—were not taken into consideration at all. When men were getting £400 a year and over in times like they were passing through at present, they had no right to receive an increase in their wages. They knew that the money market was tight, and there was a certain amount of depression all over the world. He noticed there was a Chief Inspector of

Mr. Morgan.]

Police down for £600, a new office of senior first-class inspector £500, four first-class inspectors at £450, and four second-class inspectors at £400. He would like to know what particular duty they carried out, which caused them to be all graded like that. Did the senior first-class inspector do anything that the first-class inspector could not do? He noticed in the "Miscellaneous Services" that there was the sum of £5,000 for destruction of prickly pear. Last year £10,000 was voted for this purpose, and as only £5,000 was spent this £5,000 was practically a revote. A deputation recently waited on the Home Secretary in connection with prickly-pear destruction, and he was pleased to see that the Minister said that the money was waiting for those who had prickly pear to destroy, and they had only to come along and accept it. The Press reporter of that interview led the people to believe that the local authorities had only to go into the Home Secretary and enter into an agreement with him when they would receive a certain amount of assistance for the destruction of prickly pear.

Mr. HUNTER: Did you think that that was the case?

Mr. MORGAN: The Press of Queensland led many people in his electorate to believe that it was so. They thought that the local shire council had only got to apply to the Home Secretary for assistance and they would get £1 for £1 to destroy prickly pear. He believed that where a shire had a small amount of pear to clear costing perhaps £300 the Home Secretary would grant 5s. or 7s. 6d. in the £1, and where it would cost perhaps £500 he would grant them £1 for £1, but if there was a shire that had thickly-infested pear which would cost perhaps £5,000, £10,000, £20,000, or £100,000 to clear, the Minister was not prepared to render this shire any assistance at all. Where the pear was thickest the Minister was not prepared to render any assistance at all, but where there was very little pear, and where the cost to the ratepayers would not be so great to clear it, the Minister was prepared to render them assistance.

Mr. MURPHY: Did they not take up that land and undertake to clear it?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, but they could not clear the pear off the reserves and the roads. He knew scores of people who took up prickly-pear land, who worked it for a number of years, and then had to leave it. It was the duty of the Government to be prepared to assist any shire that was prepared to kill the pear on the roads, and the assistance should not be confined to any particular locality. If the local authority was willing to spend money in the destruction of pear, the Government should render them some assistance. The Murilla Shire Council would have to spend £100,000 to clear all the pear off the roads and reserves in the shire so badly was it infested. He did not propose that the Government should advance such a large sum as that to assist the shire, but they could clear a small portion off the roads and reserves first, and the adjoining selectors could also clear their land at the same time. Sooner or later the prickly-pear question would have to be made a national question. They noticed in the report of the Under Secretary for Lands that it would cost £20,000,000 to clear the

whole of the pear in Queensland. If it cost £20,000,000 to-day, it would cost [9 p.m.] £40,000,000 in ten years. How

were they going to grapple with it? When would the State cease putting the whole of the burden on unfortunate settlers, some of whom came from other parts of the world, and did not know what would be the result of taking up pear land? The pear was growing, growing, growing; and unless something was done by the Government, it would not be many years before the whole of the hinterland of South-eastern Queensland would be a solid mass of pear. The Government should place on the Estimates a decent sum of money, and subsidise any local authority that was game to tax the people to spend £200, £300, or £500 a year to clear the pear. There was a sum of £5,000 on the Estimates towards the work, and it was a paltry nothing compared with the work to be done. Would the Home Secretary be able to give assistance to any particular shire asking for assistance in dealing with prickly pear?

The HOME SECRETARY: They will get it.

Mr. MORGAN: He was pleased to hear the hon. gentleman say so. Though there might be shires where there was only a little pear, they should be encouraged to get rid of it. If shire councils would not clear the pear, he hoped the Government would force them to do so, and he hoped subsidies would be given to assist them in clearing the pear. It was only fair to do that, and the sooner the people recognised their duty in this matter, and the sooner the daily Press of Brisbane tried to force the Government to recognise that the matter should be dealt with from a national standpoint, the sooner the pear would be destroyed.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It was stated by one gentleman at the dinner given to the Local Authorities' Association that he was sorry to see the Government were giving a grant to the local authorities to help them clear the pear; he thought that country people should do it themselves. If that kind of spirit was going to be in the Government, the country people would have to look after themselves. Some time ago people were almost persuaded by the Minister and officers of the department to take up prickly-pear land. A friend of his pointed out to an intending settler that it was impossible to clear the pear and make a living; but the man went there with his wife and family, spent all his money in trying to get rid of the pear, and left after two years without a penny. If that sort of thing was done by Ministers and officials of the department, it was a matter that wanted looking into. He might say that it did not apply to the present Government, but it had occurred in the past. The people of Queensland, and especially those who needed it most, were cared for practically from the cradle to the grave. Immediately a child wanted looking after, the State stepped in and looked after it. If a child lived in a home where the surrounding conditions were not good, the State had power to take the child away and place it where it would have a chance in life. That was a very good thing. Some hon. members opposite said that Queensland could be made, or should be made, a country where people would come and where they would desire to stay. The condition of things in Queensland was such that it was practically a

[Mr. Morgan.]

workers' paradise. There was no place where the worker paid less taxes and got better looked after than in Queensland. Children were cared for in every possible way, and if a man took more than was good for him he was provided with a place where he might stay until he came back to his senses. There was no country where more was provided for hospitals and things like that. At St. Helena and other places the inmates were producing so much that they very nearly cleared expenses. The important thing was that they were trying to turn men out from their gaols who were better men when they went out than when they went in. It used to be the custom when a man got out of gaol to have the police trailing him up. And if he went anywhere to look for a job the policeman would go in after he had left and say to the prospective employer, "Do you know who that man is? He has been in gaol."

Mr. MURPHY: Don't they do that now?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did not think so, and if the case occurred the man concerned probably deserved it. The principle of our present system was to turn out better men and women.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was misconception with regard to prickly-pear matters that he wished to clear up. He claimed credit for having included in the 1910 Local Authorities Act Amendment Act a provision for dealing with prickly pear on the part of local authorities. When he was having that Bill drafted it struck him that if the State was prepared to give certain assistance to local authorities, the local authorities themselves might well be called upon to bear a share in the destruction of the pest. A misconception seemed to have arisen in the mind of the hon. member for Murilla as to the scope of that clause, that was whether it was intended by the department to put it into operation or not. He could give the hon. member and the Committee the assurance that it was proposed to put it into operation. There were certain areas which were so badly infested in places that it was impossible for the local authority, or any person who desired to destroy prickly pear on his selection, to undertake that destruction, and owing to a slight defect in the Amendment Act of 1910, the clause there provided that the proclamation must either be in an area, or in a division of an area. Hon. members would recollect that when introducing the further amending Bill which had just passed through the House and had been transmitted to the Legislative Council, he had made a provision to meet such a case, inasmuch that it was therein provided that part of a division or part of an area might be declared to be clearable, so that to its fullest extent they might be able to put into operation the clause of the amending Act of 1910 which required the local authority to clear where ordered to do so. He desired to give hon. members the assurance that where a selector had cleared his land the local authority would have to clear the roads, and where the land was clearable, whether the selector had cleared his selection or not, the Act would be put in operation. Where it was declared to be possible to clear it, the clauses of the Act would be enforced, and although the Committee were only asked to vote £5,000 for the current year, obligations had been entered into to the extent of £10,000 with local authorities. Immediately the Act came into operation he

caused to be inserted in the Government Gazette of the 23rd June, 1911, a notice declaring certain local authorities to be clear, and imposing on them the obligation to cause their areas to be so guarded that no pear would be permitted to grow in them. Then there was a number of local authorities which were declared to be clearable. As soon as the amending Act came into operation all those portions of other shires and local authorities, which could be cleared would be likewise proclaimed. The local authorities themselves did not apparently realise that they would be compelled to take action, and it was only when he drew attention through the Press to the fact that only one or two local authorities had called upon him as the Minister of the department administering the Bill to enter into an agreement that the rest realised that they would be compelled to carry out the Act and destroy the pear within the time named in the proclamation. Others then came forward for the purpose of entering into the agreement for which provision was made in the Act. The agreements already made had, as he had said, absorbed something like £10,000, and it was thought that a further provision of £5,000 would be sufficient for the current year. He had informed the Chief Secretary at the time the Bill became law that whatever amount was required it would have to be granted by the Treasurer—whether it was £10,000 or £15,000 or £30,000 per annum. That was the position to-day. They proposed to compel the local authorities to carry out the law, and they were prepared to find them up to £1 for £1 to assist them in the destruction of the pest. The fact that merely £5,000 was on the appropriation did not imply that if local authorities came forward under the proclamation and caused the necessity for the expenditure of a further £10,000 or £15,000, then the requisite agreements would not be entered into. They would be entered into, because, so far as the Home Secretary's Department was concerned, they intended that the obligations cast upon the local authorities by the House should be carried out. Members might have his assurance to the effect that whenever a local authority was once proclaimed the Act would be enforced, and the authority had only to come along for the agreement to be entered into to assist it in carrying out its obligations. That was the assurance which was made to him by his colleague, the Treasurer, and it was the one which he required to be made when he included that provision in the Bill, and it was one that he desired to make to the Committee to-night.

Mr. HUNTER: He would like to be quite clear with regard to the statement of the Home Secretary that where selectors had cleared their land of pear, and there were roads adjoining them infested with pear, the local authorities would have to clear the pear on the roads concerned. Did he understand that the Home Secretary was prepared to assist the local authorities to do that? When passing the Local Authorities Amending Act of 1910, power was given to the Home Secretary to proclaim areas that might be made clean of pear, and to give £1 for £1 towards the cost of clearing the pear. When that clause was going through the House, he was anxious to impress on the Home Secretary the grave injustice that might be done to local authorities by imposing tasks on them that they were not capable of carrying out, and he urged that the greatest care should be exercised before

Mr. Hunter.]

proclaiming areas as capable of being cleared. Otherwise, it might happen that a municipal council might be asked to clear an area when they might not have enough rates to do it with. There would be a possibility of making shire councils insolvent, even though the Government might be willing to make the necessary advance. He remembered the debate on that occasion, because it was a very important departure which was then made in this business. The Home Secretary said then that the greatest care would be exercised and reports obtained, before making any proclamations, and that no money would be advanced to local authorities to clear, unless the whole area could be cleared—that it was not the intention of the Government to advance money for the partial clearing of an area. He supported the Minister in that attitude. The hon. member for Murilla asked that a sum of money be given to simply clear a patch of pear inside a scrub, but it was necessary to get the whole of the country cleared, and then to keep it cleared. To clear a small area within an infested area was largely a waste of money. He had had occasion recently to approach the Minister on behalf of a shire council for a sum of money to clear a stock road, on each side of which the selectors had already cleared their land. With a subsidy of £50 or £100 the shire council was prepared to clear the land, but the Home Secretary said he could not grant it.

The HOME SECRETARY: Under the provisions of the amending Bill which we have just passed, it may now be an area or a division of an area.

Mr. HUNTER: He had asked for that at that particular time. Under the amending Bill which had just gone through, there was power to advance for a part of an area, but they would have to be very careful. The part of an area which was proclaimed would not mean simply a little patch inside an infested area.

Mr. MORGAN: Ten or 12 miles of road, perhaps.

Mr. HUNTER: The Minister would have to be careful, or else there would be a danger of public money being wasted, as well as the ratepayers' money. The greatest care should be taken in the proclamation of these areas.

The HOME SECRETARY: It might be as well if he gave the information asked for as to the amount of subsidies being paid and arranged for. He quite realised with the hon. member for Maranoa that great care would be necessary in administering the original Act, as amended by the Bill recently passed. He could give his assurance that care would be taken. They would not simply allow a little hole in the centre of a patch to be cleared, but endeavour to have such areas cleared as might thereafter be kept clear of the pest. The arrangements that had been made were these: Up to £100 a subsidy of 10s. for every £1 10s. expended by the local authority; that was, in an area which was lightly infested, they gave a third of the cost of clearing. For £100 to £300 they gave 15s. for every £1 15s. spent, and for £300 and over, £1 for £1. It was in the more heavily infested areas that they would have to spend over £300.

Mr. MORGAN thanked the Minister for his explanation. This was a very important matter, and he was pleased to know the

[Mr. Hunter.

Government was prepared to assist any shire which wanted to clear a portion of its area of the pest. He understood that if there was a road 15 or 20 miles long, the land on each side of which had been taken up by settlers who had cleared their pear, and the local authority made application for assistance to clear that road, the Government were prepared to spend £1 for £1. He understood that would be taken into consideration and a report obtained, and, if thought advisable, assistance would be given to them.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have power under the Bill.

Mr. HARDACRE was also very pleased that the Home Secretary was in a position to carry out this long-wished-for assistance. What he wished to mention was this: While the Government was going in for a great deal of expense in dealing with the prickly-pear problem, both by the board which had been appointed, which it was intended to spend a good deal of money on in sending it to other countries to investigate, and also in clearing prickly pear—

The HOME SECRETARY: The board comes under the Lands Department.

Mr. HARDACRE: While they were doing that, it seemed to him that the Government were neglecting practical measures to prevent the spread of the pear which was being caused by animal pests.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have taken power under the Bill to compel local authorities to carry out the destruction of the pest. We have the power to declare any animal or vegetable to be a pest, but we have hitherto had no power to compel the local authority. In the Bill we have just passed we have decided that the Home Secretary—the administrative head—shall have the power to force the local authority to take steps to destroy the pests.

Mr. HARDACRE was very glad to hear that the Home Secretary had that power. It was about time the Government did proclaim certain animal pests, and offered a scalp bonus for the destruction of certain animals and birds which carried prickly pear.

Take, for instance, the scrub [9.30 p.m.] turkey, crows, and emus. It was well known that those birds carried the pest for miles. Every man in the country districts who spoke on the matter asked why it was not done. Every day the scrub turkey and crows were carrying prickly pear for miles, and they were causing the pear to spread ten times more quickly than it was being destroyed. Some time ago it was the custom of opossum snarers, after skinning the opossums, to throw the carcass away near the camp, and this attracted birds to the different camps. They flew from prickly pear patches to the camps, and in that way prickly pear was spread from district to district. When that was known, surely it was time the Government proclaimed such birds to be a pest and actually gave assistance to destroy them, and so prevent the spoliation of large areas of good country.

Mr. GILLIES regarded the question—£5,000 or £10,000 to eradicate prickly pear—as only trifling with the great national danger, so he would not take up the time of the Committee talking prickly pear. He wanted to refer to another matter that might appeal to some members of the Committee, that was with regard to assistance

to charitable institutions. He wanted particularly to refer to a very worthy institution in the State—the Ambulance Brigade. The subsidy for ambulance brigades was only £1 for £1. That might be quite sufficient in the older-settled districts, but it did not work out equitably in all cases. They were told that the Government was particularly anxious to assist the pioneer—the man who went out and blazed the track—and he wished to bring under the notice of the Minister a new centre at Atherton. In that district accidents were almost of weekly occurrence amongst the men scrub-felling and working on railways. These men were treated by the ambulance brigade, and the burden fell on the charitably disposed few. When the Secretary for Agriculture was in the Atherton district some time ago he made reference to the fact that in Toowoomba the ambulance brigade not only was in a sound financial position but that they had erected handsome buildings for their officers. It was pointed out to the hon. gentleman that the Cairns Ambulance Brigade was in an entirely different position—that their balance was on the wrong side of the ledger, so that the system of £1 for £1 subsidy did not work out fairly in practice. He hoped the Minister would endeavour to bring about a more equitable adjustment so far as the ambulance brigade was concerned.

Question put and passed.

ABORIGINALS, RELIEF OF.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £18,349 be granted for "Aboriginals, Relief of." Hon. members would notice that there was an increase in the vote amounting to £651 as compared with the amount voted last year. The increase was made up by different increases provided for in connection with various officers. There was an increase of £25 in the salary of Mr. Howard, the Chief Protector, an increase of £20 in the salary of the Deputy Chief Protector, an increase of £15 to the clerk, an increase to the cadet clerk of £11, and an increase to the senior protectress of £20. Provision had been made for a second protectress, the salary being £100. No provision had been made for a matron at Turnoff Lagoon, as there was no necessity for the employment of a matron in that locality. That was a saving of £10. At Barambah Settlement there was an increase in the salary of the superintendent of £20, an increase to the storekeeper of £10, an increase to the assistant superintendent of £10, and provision was made for a nurse at a salary of £35. There was an increase to the teacher of £15, and provision for three extra black employees at £12 each. The salary of the bullock-driver, which was formerly paid from incidental expenses, was now paid out of that vote, and amounted to £26. On that occasion no provision was put down for the maintenance of a settlement at Innisfail, nor at Morningson Island, the two sums which had been omitted being £150 and £220. It was not intended that those settlements would not be gone on with, but as there was no possibility of the money being expended this year no provision was made. The Chief Protector was making all the necessary arrangements for the establishment of settlements in those localities. He (Mr. Appel) received a telegram from the Chief Protector the other day stating that he had just returned from his visit of inspection to Morningson Island, where it was

proposed to establish a settlement, and on the next Estimates full provision would be made. At the Taroom Settlement there was an increase of £20 to the superintendent, an increase of £10 to the matron, an increase in the salary of the teacher of £10, and provision for a nurse at £60. There was also provision for the payment of two black employees, who were previously paid from contingencies, amounting to £43. There was a decrease in connection with the provision for Mr. Smith, who was appointed at £168, vice C. Clacher, deceased, making a decrease of £22 in that item. There was an increase of £30 in grants to missions. At Deebing Creek there was a decrease of £80, Mapoon a decrease of £10, Yarrabah a decrease of £30. There were decreases in connection with the industrial schools, where the payment was at so much per head. There was a decrease in the amount for the industrial schools, as the numbers had decreased and not so many had been sent there by the bench. There was a total decrease of £22 in the schools for aboriginals at Torres Strait, and a decrease of £60 in the contingencies. There was a decrease in the amount for provisions and incidentals at Barambah, Innisfail, and Morningson Island, but there was an increase for provisions and incidentals at Taroom of £1,400, which was caused by buildings and fencing, and an increase in the number of inmates. There was an increase in the amount for blankets, clothing, transport, relief rations, postage, and incidentals of £300, a decrease of £400 in repairs, stores, and incidentals for the "Melbidir," and an increase in the total vote of £600.

Mr. GUNN: The Committee should not begrudge the vote to the unfortunate aboriginals. (Hear, hear!) He had great sympathy with the aboriginals, and he did not think they had treated them as well as they might have done. Considering the fine country they had taken away from the aboriginals, he thought that £18,000 was little enough to give them. The aboriginals about Goondiwindi and St. George were decreasing very fast, and it would not be long before none were left. Last year an aboriginal settlement was formed at Taroom, and he would like to see a similar settlement formed at St. George. There were a lot of old blacks whom nobody wanted, and they were hunted from pillar to post. When the police wanted to send them to Barambah they said, "No; we are natives of this part of the country, and why should we be sent to another part of the country? We want to spend our last days here." He was sympathetic towards this vote, because he recognised that the Australian aboriginals were fast becoming an extinct race.

Mr. FORSYTH asked if the report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals was ready?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; it was tabled to-day.

Mr. FORSYTH: How could members intelligently discuss the Estimates unless they had the reports of the departments before them? He hoped that some better system would be adopted, so that they could get the reports of the departments before them when they were discussing the Estimates of those departments. (Hear, hear!) He agreed with the hon. member for Carnarvon that they should do what they could for the aboriginals. In the industrial schools for

Mr. Forsyth.]

aboriginals he noticed the sum of £40 down. He presumed that was for the teachers, and he thought it rather a small amount.

The HOME SECRETARY: They get board, too.

Mr. FORSYTH: Even then it was a small amount.

The HOME SECRETARY: I find that that amount is paid by the Government at the rate of 2s. 6d. per head for each inmate in the school.

Mr. FORSYTH: That was the fault of not having any report to guide them, as they did not know what the items were for. He noticed in the West some time ago that many of the blacks had no blankets, and the supply ran short. The blacks were fast dying out, especially in the civilised towns, and members would admit that in many of the towns the blacks they saw were miserable specimens of humanity, and most of their troubles were caused by the white race. He would like to see more attention given to the blacks in the camps in the far North and West, where he did not think they were altogether too well treated. Perhaps there were from fifty to 100 in a camp; some of them came into the towns and did a little work in order to obtain food; but there was no public fund from which they could be supplied with provisions. He thought some means should be provided by which those who were unable to get work or unable to work—many of them were mere wrecks—might be supplied with food.

The HOME SECRETARY: We do that.

Mr. HUXHAM was glad to hear the sympathetic remarks to which previous speakers had given expression. He did not think one-quarter of what should be done was done for these unfortunate beings; and he felt sure that whatever the Home Secretary might decide to do to better their condition would receive the support of members on both sides. One case that came under his notice was that of a half-caste girl who complained that her life was not what it ought to be. She had every appearance of refinement, and did not look as if she was uncared for. She worked in a boarding-house where there was a great deal of work to do from early morning till late at night; and she wished to be allowed to leave her place and get another place instead of having to go back to the camp of her people. He thought there should be a relaxation of the regulation in such cases; and such girls should be allowed more liberty in the matter of going from one place to another, under the direction of the department, so that they might have a greater amount of comfort.

Mr. DOUGLAS (*Cook*): Not having had the opportunity of reading the report of the Chief Protector for the current year, he was not able to speak on the subject as he would like. He wished to know from the Home Secretary whether, in his report, Mr. Howard had made certain recommendations with regard to the betterment of the islanders of Torres Strait, who were of a different race from the aboriginals of the mainland. He understood that Mr. Howard, who was at Thursday Island two or three months ago, had propounded a scheme for the betterment of the islanders there, though it might involve the expenditure of a considerable sum of money; and he would like to know whether the Home Secretary was prepared to act on the recommendation. Another matter he wished to bring under

[*Mr. Forsyth.*

the notice of the hon. gentleman was a complaint made by a resident of the Mossman district. He had been furnished with a copy of the depositions taken in the case, the prosecution of a respectable resident of the district, Mr. Rex, who was fined £15 for having on his premises an aboriginal without a permit. Briefly the facts of the case were these: Early in the month of April or May an aboriginal girl was taken to the protector at Mossman by Mrs. Rex for the purpose of giving her employment. Permission was subsequently refused. In the meantime the girl was employed. Mr. Rex, considered that to ask the girl to

[10 p.m.] go back to her past employment would be to subject her to a great injustice, as it would have been intolerable in the case of any white person. These good people, with the idea of shielding this woman from the brutalities which were inflicted upon her in the place where she was previously employed, refused to give her to the protector of aboriginals, and Mr. Rex was subsequently brought before the court, and fined £15. He was requested to ask the Home Secretary whether, in view of his action in sending the girl to Yarrabah Mission Station, there were not some grounds for the complaints made by the girl to Mr. Rex, and whether that gentleman was not justified in taking the stand that he did. He was one of the leading cane-growers of the Mossman, and he (Mr. Douglas) hardly thought that he would absolutely defy the law. Mr. Rex had been fined purely on account of his ignorance of the law. It was quite apparent that the reasons for refusing her employment at the hands of Mr. Rex were groundless—the reason being given that she belonged to a Loy on some station in the back country. By sending her back to Yarrabah the authorities must have been aware that it was not fair to send her back to her previous employment. He knew that there were some forms to be gone through in getting refund of a fine of this nature, but he had thought that the matter should be brought before Parliament on this vote. He asked the Home Secretary if he was likely to take any further action by way of exonerating Mr. Rex from the fine; or, in the alternative, from being subjected to a month's imprisonment in Cairns goal? It was only right that a man of his standing should be set right by some action of the Home Secretary.

Mr. PETRIE congratulated the Government and the Home Secretary on the interest they had taken in the aboriginals. Some years ago they were very badly treated. He was glad to see that the Chief Protector and the chief clerk were down for an increase, as they had done good work. He would like to see a larger amount, but they had to go slow. He hoped the Minister would see his way to increase their salaries next year.

Mr. HUXHAM: We do not need to go slow in matters like this.

Mr. PETRIE did not think they needed to go slow on this matter. He thought that sometimes they did a little too much cheese-paring. He had had an interest in the aboriginals, not only of Queensland, but in the vicinity of Brisbane, ever since he was a youngster. An esteemed relative of his, who was now deceased, had taken a great interest in the aboriginals of the State. He thought that in the past they had been

reated scandalously; if they had taken them up years ago, as they should have done, they might have made a better race of them. Some people said the aboriginals had no intelligence, but a few years ago, when he visited St. Helena, he saw a blackfellow who was sentenced to a long period of imprisonment, who had been put in the saddlery department. The warden showed him (Mr. Petrie) a saddle that this blackfellow had made, and he did not think that any white man could have made a better saddle. They had taken the country from the aboriginals, and had not treated them as they ought to have been treated. A former Government some years ago were so stingy with the blacks that they would not give them their blankets. He believed the Home Secretary was doing good work, and would continue to do good work in the future. In the North they had races that they did not know much about, and he believed the Home Secretary would do all he could to further their interests and protect them.

Mr. MURPHY called the attention of the Home Secretary to the fact that although the Chief Protector's report showed that there were something like 600 aboriginals in the Normanton district, not a single penny was spent on food for them. There was a pretty big camp over the Norman River, and the police there should do the same as the sergeant at Crocody did—they should see that those aboriginals got some food.

The HOME SECRETARY did not think he need assure the Committee of the very deep interest he took in the aboriginals in Queensland. Since he had been head of the Home Department it had been his duty and his pleasure to visit the different aboriginal settlements throughout Queensland, and as a result of his tour of inspection he had been able to effect many improvements in the settlements, and consequently the position of the inmates had been improved also. It was very pleasing to hear the sympathetic references to the native inhabitants of the State, and he could assure hon. members that the permanent officers were in full sympathy with the aboriginals. During recent years the Chief Protector had been in the habit of making a complete tour of the State. He was on his annual tour at the present time, which occupied him three to four months. The Chief Protector passed through the whole of the Northern coastal portions of the State, and then through the inner portions, so as to enable him to obtain the fullest knowledge of the aboriginal inhabitants he had to protect. He was very pleased to hear that the police who were acting as protectors were likewise doing their duty. With regard to assistance to old aboriginals who were unable to work, probably the amount for aboriginals in the Northern portion of the State was not great and for this reason: That with the exception of a few ancient members of that race a very great proportion of the aboriginals were in employment, earning good wages. He would cause inquiry to be made and ascertain whether there were any cases in the North where assistance was needed, and if required that assistance would be given. He would, at the same time, call the attention of the police to the fact that his attention had been directed to the fact that they were not carrying out their duties as acting

protectors as effectively as they should. In reference to the case which had been referred to by the hon. member for Buranda, he would inform the Committee that the greatest care was required in connection with half-caste girls. Unfortunately, in many cases they were under temptation, and the greatest care had to be exercised in connection with their welfare. The girl in question was in the employ of a lady of South Brisbane; and the fact, as the hon. member stated, that she was a remarkably well-conditioned girl, was proof that she was not in any way cruelly treated. However, that girl, as most of them were, was fond of going out at night, and she was not permitted to go out at night. Full inquiry had been made into that case, and in order to see that those girls were properly attended to an additional protectress had been appointed who would regularly visit the girls, and see that they were treated as they should be. The girl herself admitted that she had no complaint to make against her mistress. He might inform the Committee that he had caused a rule to be made that none of those girls should be employed within the metropolitan area, for obvious reasons, and he had recently given instructions that the wages paid to the girls should be revised, because the amount was too small for the work which they were called upon to perform. It would not be wise to allow persons in the metropolitan area where white girls were available to employ half-caste girls at 2s. 6d. a week. In the case which had been brought under his notice by the hon. member for Cook, the girl was supposed to be employed on a station under agreement. Although she was reported and claimed to be married to one of the black boys on the station, she went into the employment of the person named by the hon. member for Cook. The matter was brought under the notice of the protector, who, upon making an inspection, found that the girl was working there. The matter had not been reported to the protector. She was under no agreement and was apparently obtaining no wages. The Crown Law Department advised that a case lay against Mr. Rex for illegally employing the girl. They could not make any discrimination, as the Legislature had made provision for the protection of aboriginals, and the protector simply carried out the law. As a second boy claimed that this girl was his wife, the girl was sent to Yarrabah Mission Station, where she now was. The hon. member also referred to certain recommendations made by the Chief Protector in connection with the aboriginals of Torres Strait Islands. The Chief Protector recommended that the whole of the area of these islands should be strictly reserved for aboriginals. The Lands Department entered into certain obligations with persons who obtained leases of the islands for the purpose of planting coconuts or pearlshelling stations, but the Chief Protector wished to have all the areas reserved for the aboriginals. The Chief Protector also considered that the islanders should be compelled to maintain themselves by planting coconuts and béche-de-mer fishing. The Aboriginals Department had a fund out of which they made advances to aboriginals to secure luggers and boats to enter into the pearl-fishing business, and in many instances he was glad to say they carried out a profitable business in Torres Strait. It would

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

be a source of satisfaction to hon. members if they could see the comfort in which these aboriginals existed, as they made wages not only by cocoanut planting, and pearlshell and bécio-de-mer fishing, but also by engaging themselves on the luggers as seamen or attendants to divers. They were doing everything in the islands to keep the race as pure as possible. They made provision for the supply of tools. Great advances were made as far as the education of the children was concerned. The children in the Torres Strait schools were equal to, and in some respects above, the average white children in our own State schools. It showed that they had a considerable amount of intelligence, and the teachers had given to the best of their ability in the instruction of the children. Arrangements had been made for a regular medical inspection of the natives of the islands. Unfortunately, an epidemic of dysentery visited them from an Eastern port, and some deaths occurred. Smallpox appeared in the Aru Islands, which were only 600 miles from the Torres Strait, and the Commissioner of Public Health visited the islands and vaccinated as many of the natives as he possibly could, and that would prevent them from being decimated should smallpox visit the islands. All that could be done was done on these aboriginal stations. The vote for blankets had been increased by £300, and he always saw that a good supply of blankets was given out. He gave instructions for a distribution of blankets in connection with the King's coronation, and on one occasion, when he witnessed a distribution of blankets to the blacks, he saw there was no stint in the number of blankets distributed. He claimed that he had done some good for the aboriginals, and he saw that justice was done to them, and while he remained at the head of the Home Department he would see that justice was done to them.

Mr. DOUGLAS drew attention to the difficulties experienced by stations employing aboriginals. It was admitted that the blacks were indispensable as stockmen. The station-owners were compelled to pay the boy's wages into the Savings Bank, and there was some difficulty in withdrawing those amounts when the boys wanted to go into town. In the Coen and Ebagoolah districts there was some difficulty owing to the women not being able to get aboriginal women to assist in the house work. He knew that aboriginals were not to be employed in hotels, but in a place like Coen, where they could not get white girls, it was hard on the hotel-keepers, especially when they remembered that the miners stayed at the hotels, and had to be catered for. It was different to hotels in towns, and some consideration should be given to them. There was no reason to think that the aboriginals would be supplied with liquor. He thought that they should be allowed to do certain work about the hotels in those places.

Question put and passed.

At 10.30 p.m.,

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

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

[Hon. J. G. Appel.

DRAINAGE OF MINES BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council agreed to the Assembly's amendment in new clause 17.

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