

particular tender. The same complaint had been made in New South Wales—viz., that tenders were called for different articles, and favour could be shown by bunching the articles together and giving the contract to particular tenderers. If the Government called for different tenders, the lowest tenderer, no matter how small the difference might be, unless some substantial defect could be shown, was entitled to receive the contract. In this case no doubt Shaw and Co. were entitled to receive it. The Colonial Secretary left out one thing—that was, that iron shovels were being received instead of steel shovels, which made a very essential difference. If the tender was for steel, and the contract was allowed to be performed by the supply of iron shovels at the same price, they could very easily see how a tenderer could receive favour.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said with reference to shovels, the storekeeper said he had made a mistake, and he brought two shovels to him (the Colonial Secretary), but he could not tell "t'other from which." He, however, gave positive instructions that in every case the storekeeper should receive only the articles tendered for, and that nothing should be substituted. He had no doubt those instructions would be literally carried out.

Mr. DICKSON, in reply, would briefly state that had that information been given to the people interested, there would have been no occasion for the letter or for him to move the adjournment of the House. He must take exception to the statement that it was for the best interest of the service that if two people tendered for work, both of whom were quite eligible, that preference should be given to one simply because he had had a longer connection with the department. Such a practice would vitiate every principle of tendering, and lead to future tendering being considered an idle formality. He begged to withdraw the motion for adjournment.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

COAST ISLANDS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House went into Committee upon the Queensland Coast Islands Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that clause 1—Governor to issue proclamation—as read, stand part of the Bill.

Mr. DICKSON said that, in the course of the debate on the second reading, the Colonial Secretary mentioned that a cruiser had been purchased to carry out the jurisdiction of the colony with regard to the extended boundaries proposed. They knew that the honourable gentleman was fond of armaments, but he hoped that while he had given them a standing army a naval establishment also would not be added. Re-

cursing to the purchase of the cruiser, he should like to have fuller particulars. He believed that the whole of the "Pearl" belonged to the Government. What was paid for her?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the price was £600, of which the colony paid half. He never understood that the whole of the vessel belonged to the colony, but half only. At the time the "Pearl" was bought the colony and the Imperial Government paid half each, and the expense of the coast service was borne in equal proportions. How the whole of the "Pearl" could, therefore, be considered to belong to the colony he could not understand. She was a cheap vessel at the price.

Mr. DICKSON considered the information supplied by the Colonial Secretary satisfactory.

Mr. DOUGLAS presumed that £300 more would be required to fit out the "Pearl." If they could purchase the vessel and fit her out for £600 they should do very well.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the amount mentioned by the honourable member as the cost of fitting out the cruiser was the amount the Government proposed to place on the Estimates. The "Pearl" had been placed on the slip, the whole of her copper had been stripped off and she had been re-coppered, and her bottom had been found to be quite good. She was a cheap ship, and might last for many years.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that under the Bill they would annex certain islands, and necessarily assume the responsibility of governing them. Although they would belong to the colony, the intermediate seas would not, and the Government would have no authority whatever to transport an offender from one of the islands to their own territory. Supposing a court was held on Prince of Wales Island, and an offender was convicted and sentenced to be imprisoned, they had no authority to transport him to the colony. A draft measure dealing with the subject was lately transmitted by the Imperial Government to the Governor for report. The point that he now raised was a very serious one. The Imperial Government, of course, had dominion over all the Australian seas, but the colony's authority extended only to the coast and three miles from it, and when their officers got that distance from one of these islands with a prisoner the man would be at perfect liberty to escape.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY could not understand how the law laid down by the honourable member held good. Had they no authority to shift a man from Moreton Island, the Percy Group, or Fraser's Island? The legal aspect of the question had never struck him, but he had no alarm about any serious results, feeling quite sure that the Imperial Government would take every means to enable the colony to

carry out the authority under which the islands named in the Bill were proposed to be annexed. If he were on board a cutter in charge of a prisoner he should risk the technical doubt, if he had one, and stick to the prisoner, because he was quite sure if any difficulty occurred the Imperial Government would remedy it. How did Sir Arthur Gordon, High Commissioner for the South Pacific, exercise his authority? He moved and banished men from island to island, and even hanged them.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the High Commissioner acted under Imperial authority and under special powers. The point he had raised was a serious one, and he had brought it forward because it was deserving of consideration. He would also like to ask if it was the intention of the Government to appoint a travelling commissioner to administer justice in the islands? Would it be necessary to appoint a new judicial officer?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there would be, as he had said the other evening, a captain, mate, four seamen, and cook for the "Pearl," and they would be under the orders of the Police Magistrate on Thursday Island. It was not intended to appoint a commissioner. The very fact of the Police Magistrate named having the "Pearl" and such a crew under his orders would be sufficient, he believed, to keep the inhabitants in order. He had had very little trouble hitherto, without a boat, it might be said, as the cutter was chiefly engaged in pilot service. The Police Magistrate at Thursday Island now held a commission from Sir Arthur Gordon, but would, he presumed, be relieved when the annexation was completed; and, not believing in divided allegiance, he hoped he would be relieved. As for the unruly refugees on some of the islands, there would be still less trouble in keeping them in order—they would clear out.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that the powers vested in the Police Magistrate at Thursday Island as Deputy Commissioner would no doubt be withdrawn. His commission simply extended to Murray and Darnley Islands, which would be included in our boundaries, and when that took place the powers would be unnecessary, and would be withdrawn, he fancied. He quite agreed with the Colonial Secretary, that the mere fact of the annexation would be quite sufficient to set all difficulties at rest. Only now and then were there objectionable characters upon the islands, and, knowing that at the present time no one could legally touch them, they were enabled to go on to the islands with impunity; but that would cease when it was discovered that they had been annexed by Queensland. An occasional visit from the cruiser would be quite sufficient to keep everything in order. A very

great advantage was being conferred upon the rest of Australia by the annexation of these islands: they commanded the passage of Torres Straits; and he considered it an important thing for the future of Australian trade that the passage connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans should belong to Queensland and be under its control.

Question put and passed.

The schedule and preamble being put and passed, the Chairman reported the Bill with amendments. The report was adopted, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. J. Scott) presented the report of the Committee in Supply for the half-year ending June 30, 1879.

The PREMIER moved that it be adopted.

Mr. DICKSON asked when might honourable members expect the Estimates for the ensuing year to be placed on the table, and when would the Colonial Treasurer deliver his Financial Statement?

The PREMIER: Next week.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole of Ways and Means for the purpose of granting Supply.

Question put and passed.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS DURING RECESS BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee to consider the above Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—Power to Speaker to issue writ—put and passed.

On the PREMIER moving clause 2—Member accepting office to notify the same to the Speaker—

Mr. GRIFFITH was understood to say that in the Imperial Act it was provided that the Speaker should not issue his warrant until fourteen days after he had caused notice of his intention to appear in the *London Gazette*; he assumed that the object of that provision was to prevent any mistake being made. He did not know whether under the clause before the committee the Speaker was supposed to take notice of the signature of every honourable member. He should not, however, move any amendment.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he had a very serious objection to the clause—it was, that everything depended upon the individual who accepted the office. The question whether the office accepted was one of profit or not, requiring that the Speaker should issue a new writ for election, should not be left to the discretion