

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST 1864

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 26 August, 1864.

Reform of Aborigines. — Northern Railway. — Rents of Crown Lands. — Electoral Bill. — Provincial Councils Bill. — Proposed Line of Railway from Toowoomba to Warwick.

REFORM OF ABORIGINES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the following resolutions, viz. :—“(1.) That the Government be authorised to grant land to persons who may be prepared to undertake the amelioration of the aborigines by the establishment of missions or industrial schools. (2.) That the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the foregoing resolution be invited.” The House would recollect that the Government had it in their power under the Land Act to grant land for the benefit of the aborigines, but notwithstanding that such

was the case, they had thought it better, before availing themselves of such power, to consult the House. He would state for the information of the House that there were two propositions at present before the Government from parties who desired to do good to the aborigines. One had emanated from Bishop Patterson, the Bishop of Melanesia, who thought that Curtis Island or some tract of land to the northward should be granted for the purpose mentioned; the other proposition was to the effect that the Moravian mission, which had been very successful in New South Wales in their treatment of the aborigines, should be invited to found an institution here. It was not too much to ask the House to recognize the desirability of improving the condition of the natives by the means mentioned in the resolution. There was no demand made for money; nor, under the circumstances, did the Government consider such a demand desirable. They simply asked the House to sanction the Government in granting permission to occupy land for the objects stated.

Mr. MACKENZIE expressed his concurrence with the resolution, which practically carried into effect the recommendations of the select committee upon the native police, and the condition of the aborigines, which sat in 1861, and of which he was chairman.

Dr CHALLINOR cordially supported the motion.

Mr. DOUGLAS agreed with the resolutions, but he thought that Facing Island, recommended by Bishop Patterson, was scarcely the most eligible spot for the purpose. Further northward, at Port Bowen, was a site which possessed the advantage of a beautiful harbor, and which was far secluded from the city. If Bishop Patterson wanted to do any good with the aborigines, it would be better that he founded his establishment far from any township. Port Bowen was beautifully situated, and in every way eligible for the purpose. There might at present be a difficulty in obtaining supplies, but he thought in the early stage of the mission that would rather be an advantage than not.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY stated that before any land was granted, he would bring the suggestions of the honorable member (Mr. Douglas) under the notice of Bishop Patterson. He believed, with the honorable member for the Burnett, that it was undesirable to reserve "hunting grounds," as they were termed, on the stations for the aborigines. It was better to make a special grant of land in the manner indicated in the resolutions. He believed that the place at present considered to be most suitable by the bishop was somewhere about Cape Keppel; but this would be a matter for after consideration.

The resolutions were then put and passed.

NORTHERN RAILWAY.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS said, that in rising to make the motion stand-

ing in his name, he did not conceive it necessary for him to make many observations, more especially as the money for the construction of the railway from Rockhampton to Westwood had already been voted by the House. The application he now had to make to the House was more of a formal character than anything else. It would be remembered that the Railway Act required, that before a line was commenced the plans and sections should be laid before the House for their approval, and it was in accordance with this clause of the Act that he now brought forward this resolution. In approving of the plans, the Government engineer had, to a great extent, to take the responsibility upon his own shoulders, and the Government had to be guided by him. He (Mr. Macalister) would communicate to the House as much information as was given by that engineer to the Government. The line (of the plans and sections of which the House was now asked to approve) was intended to run thirty-three miles from Rockhampton, in the direction of Westwood. In the neighborhood of Westwood, principal roads from the interior in that part concentrated. There was, in the first place, the road from Taroom, bringing nearly the whole of the produce from the Upper and Lower Dawson. Then there was the road from Springsure, bringing the traffic from the Nogoia and the Comet. The traffic from the stations in the Leichhardt and Mitchell districts, on the Planet, the Barcoo, and other rivers, also tended to this point. There were three new roads from Peak Downs now being made, which, although contributing at present but the produce of a few stations between the Dawson and Mackenzie Rivers, must, when opened, bring in traffic from the stations west of Apis Creek, from the Gordon Downs, the Peak Downs, with their gold and copper mines, and those parts of the Kennedy, watered by the Belyando. Westwood was, in fact, a point to which the traffic of a large extent of back country converged, and no doubt the traffic would be concentrated there. The goods believed to have been conveyed along this line during 1863, amounted to 5,596 tons, being an increase of 100 per cent. on the traffic for 1862. Allowing, then, the very moderate increase in traffic of thirty-three per cent. for each year, during the next three years, along this line of road, they would find that in the year in which the railway would probably be finished, the traffic would amount to 13,264 tons. The number of bales of wool conveyed along this line during 1863, had been estimated at 7,000,—for the present year, at 9,300,—for 1865 at 12,300—and for 1866, at 16,000. In carrying on the surveys, every care had been taken to obtain the best line of route, and the easiest gradients. The heaviest part of the line—and that but at one spot—showed a gradient of one in fifty-one; there was also at another part a gradient of one in fifty-eight. The curves were also of the easiest character, not

being less than twenty-six chains. The most expensive part of the construction of the line occurred in the neighborhood of Rockhampton. During the flood season, the Fitzroy rushed down at the rate of seven or eight knots an hour; and, in consequence, heavy viaducts and expensive stone embankments would have to be constructed near Rockhampton in connection with the railway. The four and a-half miles from Rockhampton would cost £10,000 per mile, but the average estimate of the whole thirty-three miles of line was £6,000 per mile. The country around Rockhampton was subject to heavy floods, and to avoid this flooded country was impossible. The floods of last year were the highest ever known, and contributed some benefit in fixing the highest probable flood mark. The level of the rails had been taken above this highest flood mark, and provision had been made for the passage under the line of a large body of water. On this line of rail, in the neighborhood of Rockhampton, the construction of a considerable amount of expensive works, in the shape of viaducts and embankments, was necessitated. He did not deem it necessary for him to detain the House any longer, but he was willing to furnish any member with any additional information he might require. With the present traffic, and the prospect of increasing traffic, he believed the Government to be justified in undertaking this railway. He must say that as they were making a railway to the westward of the Colony, they were bound, when circumstances required it, to carry on a similar work in the north, and he trusted that the inhabitants of the northern districts would give the Government credit for using their best exertions to effect this object.

Mr. DOUGLAS was gratified to find that there had been greater progress in connection with the construction of this railway than he had anticipated. At the beginning of the session he had expressed his disbelief in the *bonâ fides* of the Government with reference to their scheme of a northern railway. He admitted that the action of the Government up to the present time in connection with this work, had been satisfactory, and had, to a certain extent, removed his incordiality. He was now willing to give the Government the credit of being actuated by an earnest desire to form a railway in the northern district. He was also glad to find, from the statistics quoted, that it was probable that within a short period the railway would pay its own expenses, owing to the traffic which it would receive. He knew that it was true that in the neighborhood of Rockhampton the expenses for the construction of the railway would be large, as compared with the cost on other parts of the line, but he would be glad to have the assurance of the Government that the line would be formed in such a manner as to be convertible from the narrow gauge into the broad gauge. Although the narrow gauge

might serve for a number of years, yet the bridges, viaducts, &c., should be so constructed that they should be available for the broad gauge, when the circumstances of the Colony required it. He was glad to see, by the plans and survey, that one point which was considered most difficult had been surmounted. He alluded to Sebastopol Range, at which an ascent of one in seventy had been obtained. He still believed that there would not be much traffic on this railway, as long as it was only thirty miles in extent, for the reason that it would not be worth the while of bullock drays to unload at Westwood, instead of making the additional day's journey to the port of shipment. He trusted, however, that in a comparatively short period they might see railroads constructed to the north and west, to the extent of two or three hundred miles.

The resolution was then put and passed.

RENTS OF CROWN LANDS.

Dr. CHALLINOR moved, pursuant to notice,—"That in the opinion of this House the highly profitable nature of pastoral pursuits in Queensland, in ordinary seasons, leads to much enterprise and a large investment of capital. (2.) That any great difference between the actual value of runs and the rent paid to the Crown for them, creates a correspondingly high premium upon the leases of such runs. (3.) That the interest upon such premiums is equivalent to the payment of additional rent. (4.) That other things being equal, it would be more economical, and therefore more beneficial, to a vendee to purchase at a small premium a run with a Crown rent somewhat commensurate with its value, than at a high premium to purchase one with a small Crown rent; as in the former case he would be saved the expenditure of a large amount of capital, which in the latter case he would have to pay to the vendor—the interest upon which would represent the difference between the assumed actual value of the run and the Crown rent. (5.) That small Crown rents, conjoined with the large returns of ordinary seasons, stimulate reckless and highly injurious speculations. (6.) That a similar combination of small rents and large returns considerably enhance the price of stock required for occupying new country. (7.) That the system of small Crown rents, under the above circumstances, being injurious to the revenue and prejudicial to the purchasers of leases of runs, and of stock required for occupying new country, ought to be abandoned—due regard being had to the contracts entered into by the Crown." He said it was not his intention to take up the time of the House by speaking at any length in support of the resolutions. But he had been charged with being an enemy to the squatters and with laboring under a sort of monomania with regard to squatting pursuits, and, as he thought it due to himself and the constituency he represented that he

should dispassionately and succinctly state the grounds of his opposition, he had placed these resolutions on the paper. He did not for a moment suppose that the House would adopt them, not because they were unsound in character, but because their effect would be to divert into the public exchequer a large portion of that wealth which now found its way into the pockets of the large stockholders and squatters.

Mr. R. CRIBB said if the honorable member would withdraw the fifth and seventh resolutions he would vote for the others.

Mr. BELL fully concurred with the honorable member for Ipswich in his belief that the resolutions would never pass the House. He (Mr. Bell) should not therefore enter upon any discussion upon the whole question. But he would take the opportunity of asking the honorable member, who appeared so fully to have taken under his protection the interests of the vendee, how it was that he had not taken into consideration the position of the vendor?

Mr. MACKENZIE said, he thought the resolutions, which were occupying the time of the House, were perfectly useless. They would interfere essentially with the Land Act, and could not be assented to by the House. The honorable member did not expect them to pass, and had brought them forward just to express his peculiar opinions on the subject of squatting, which, as every one knew, were very wide of the mark.

The COLONIAL TREASURER also designated the seven resolutions as a series of amiable aphorisms, which served merely to prove the ignorance of the mover in reference to the practical character of squatting pursuits.

Mr. SANDEMAN said it would have been better if the honorable member for Ipswich (Dr. Challinor), instead of putting the resolutions on the paper, had explained to the House what he really meant by them. It was hardly consistent with the general character of the honorable member to move a series of resolutions upon a subject of which he knew little or nothing, for whenever the honorable member had addressed the House upon the squatting interest he had invariably betrayed his want of experience in squatting pursuits.

Dr. CHALLINOR, in reply, said that in bringing the resolutions before the House it was not necessary for him to have any practical acquaintance with squatting pursuits. They were based upon commercial principles. No doubt squatting was a very profitable pursuit, since the House was so frequently informed that it was owing to the pastoral capabilities of the country that Queensland had become so prosperous. In reply to the remark of the honorable member for West Moreton (Mr. Bell), he begged to say that the interests of the vendor were quite as carefully guarded in the resolutions as those of the vendee. The principle embodied in them would at some future day be

recognised and acted upon. As to the allegation of ignorance of pastoral pursuits, he would ask whether such persons as Stuart Mills, Adam Smith, or other persons, who treated upon political economy, were necessarily versed in squatting pursuits? He believed his acquaintance with that subject was too intimate to be palatable to the squatting members of the House.

The question was then put and negatived without division.

ELECTORAL BILL.

On the motion of the honorable Colonial Secretary, the order of the day for the committal of this Bill was discharged from the paper.

PROVINCIAL COUNCILS BILL.

Upon the order of the day being read for the committal of the Provincial Councils Bill,

Mr. DOUGLAS said it was one of the Bills in the same category as the last, inasmuch as there was no chance of its passing through the House, and certainly not through the Council. He did not approve of the provision for making provincial councils nominative. The new Bill gave no legislative power to the councils, but only an administrative power; it delegated to the nominee councils the function of administering the votes of the Parliament—just so much of the power as was now exercised by the Executive. He trusted the honorable the Minister for Lands and Works would not press the Bill into committee, for he believed it to be utterly inefficient even for what it attempted, while it was unsound in principle. The councils would never enjoy the confidence of the public.

Mr. BELL did not agree with the remarks of the honorable member for Port Curtis. Although the Bill was in a very great degree a new one, still the whole subject had been before the House and discussed. He concurred with the honorable member for Port Curtis, that it was not desirable to delegate the functions of the Executive, except in certain cases. But this, he thought, was one of them. The great bulk of the money which would be expended under the Bill would be, not money collected in the several districts, and by the people themselves, but Government money. He thought the operation of the Bill would effect a saving of expenditure, and that the money would be laid out with an eye to the public interest.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS said he thought it necessary to make a few observations, after what had been said by the honorable member for Port Curtis. It did seem to him a very difficult matter for the Government to please that honorable member at any time. He had first stated that there was no likelihood of the Bill passing the Upper House. Well, if it did not pass, the responsibility rested elsewhere. The honorable member had also objected that the Bill

did not go far enough. When the original Bill was before the House, it was advanced by honorable members that it went too far—that it took out of the hands of the Executive the power that they ought to exercise themselves. The feeling of the House was that there was more confidence to be placed in the Government than any corporation, and it was at one time intended to have withdrawn the Bill altogether. But the Government did not do that. The Bill had been reformed to meet the requirements of the country, and the wishes of some honorable members. The Government had been so much in the practice of carrying out in the country districts the very proposition that was embraced in the measure before the House, that they felt it necessary to bring it forward in the very shape in which it was now in the amended Bill. As to the bodies under this Bill not enjoying the confidence of the public, that was a matter of small moment. If those bodies carried out the public works with which they would be entrusted, all would be done that was required; and the confidence of the public was a matter of not very vital importance. The public desired the works to be done, and if that desire was satisfied nothing else was required. There were districts in which it would not be possible for a staff of Government officers to look after the works—the remote portions of the Maranoa, the Warrego, the remote portions of the Leichhardt and Kennedy districts. Yet those were the very districts to which the Bill would best apply. The Government could not send a staff of officers and men to carry out works there, unless at a greater expense than would be incurred in the works themselves; and the local bodies under the Bill would carry them out. Upon good information the Government would appoint those bodies, for the purpose of expending the votes of the Parliament. His own opinion was, that many public works, which it would be useless for the Government to attempt now would be carried out with great public advantage under the Bill. The power to be conferred on the councils was not one which the Government would desire to delegate, if it were possible to exercise it efficiently themselves; but the country being so extensive, and the seat of Government being in the extreme south, while the works under Government were spread so widely, it was impossible, unless by some such mode as was now proposed, to do justice to all districts.

Mr. SANDEMAN approved of the Bill, and considered it absolutely necessary that some such measure should be passed if the Government were to carry out any local improvements in the remote districts. He hoped the honorable member for Port Curtis would not press his objections.

Mr. BROOKES expressed a hope that the Government would not press the Bill upon the House at that late period of the session.

It appeared to him to be one of those adventurous and speculative measures which the Government delighted in, and would he believed do more harm than appeared at first sight. He thought a knowledge of the fact that the funds of the Colony, instead of being in the hands of the Government, were delegated to provincial councils, would have the effect of damaging our credit at home. A similar measure was, he observed, about to be introduced in New South Wales, and he thought it was advisable to defer the consideration of the question, at any rate until next session.

Mr. McLEAFAN said the honorable member for Port Curtis had opposed the Bill in a general way, but had not defined the reasons for his opposition. To listen to the honorable member, one would suppose that it was an absolute measure to take effect throughout the length and breadth of the country; whereas, it would be seen by the second clause, that it was perfectly optional for any district to take advantage of its provisions or not. The working of the Bill would prove whether the honorable member's opinion of it was just or otherwise. It had been formed for the sole purpose of doing that justice to the outlying districts, which it was admitted was due to them. He disagreed with the remark made by one honorable member, that its effect would be to take the responsibility from the Government. He believed the persons who would be nominated by the Government, would be responsible to them, and the Executive would be responsible to the House for carrying out the entire machinery of the Bill. There was a provision which enabled the Government to cancel any appointment, or to make any fresh appointment if necessary. He should support the Bill, which he believed would be a boon to the country.

Mr. R. CRIBB moved,—“That the question be amended by the omission of all the words following the word ‘That,’ with a view to the insertion, in their place, of the words, ‘This House will, on this day month, resolve itself into the said committee.’” He thought the Bill was a better one than the last, but that it would be better to withdraw it altogether. If it had been confined to the remote districts, he thought its operation might have proved beneficial, but as it stood, every district might take advantage of its provisions.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was quite sure the Government would be satisfied to withdraw the motion, but that was not the question. The question was, whether the northern and western districts, who attached great importance to the measure, were to reap the benefit of its provisions or not. The Bill was intended for those districts, and was framed to meet their requirements, and it seemed hard that it should be postponed for no other reason than because it was late in the session, and the Bill would

occupy some little time in consideration. It was not a political question to which the Government attached any importance.

Mr. DOUGLAS said, perhaps he had expressed himself too strongly. No one was more fully aware than himself of the importance of the question. But he had not contemplated its discussion this session. He thought it should be treated with a clear sense of its importance, and that it was not desirable to pass a Bill which was applicable to one session only. However beneficial the measure before the House might be to certain districts, it could not be said that it would apply to the Colony at large some few years hence. The honorable Colonial Secretary had stated that the Bill was framed to meet the requirements of the outlying districts. But it applied equally to East Moreton, Maryborough, or Rockhampton, and there was no doubt, therefore, that it would give dissatisfaction to a large number of persons for whose benefit it was designed. He thought the measure was altogether very deficient; it gave the councils no inherent powers whatever—it merely authorised them to have something to say in the expenditure of funds in their district, but they had in reality no control over them. The Bill would also have the effect of bringing the councils into antagonism with the House. To sum up, he thought the Bill would be neither useful nor lasting. It would simply create a number of committees or councils without powers or position, and as their advice would frequently be rejected, they would not be likely to retain office for any length of time. He had no particular objection to proceed with the Bill, but he thought it would be more desirable to postpone it, at any rate until the next day of sitting.

Mr. PUGH said he thought all the objections which had been advanced, had been provided for by the Bill, and he should, therefore, give it his support.

Mr. R. CRIBB then withdrew his amendment, the original question was put and passed, and the House went into committee on the Bill.

PROPOSED LINE OF RAILWAY FROM TOOWOOMBA TO WARWICK.

Mr. McLEAN moved, pursuant to amended notice,—“That this House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on a Supplementary Loan Estimate for the year 1864, the sum of £329,467 13s., for the making of the railway between Toowoomba and Warwick.” He said he had put this resolution on the paper with a good deal of anxiety, because he was aware of his inability to place the matter before the House in that lucid way the Minister for Lands and Works would have done, had he taken it in hand. But as the Government had not thought proper to bring

it forward, he felt it was incumbent on him, as the representative of the district most deeply interested, to do so. In the first railway policy of the Government, it was clearly provided that a branch railway to Warwick should be carried out simultaneously with the branch to Dalby, and, in consequence of that, and of the admission on the part of the Government that the Warwick branch line was necessary for the development of a magnificent district, peculiarly adapted for agricultural purposes,—(hear, hear)—he deemed it his duty to bring the subject before the House in the best manner he could. Most honorable members who had any knowledge of that district would, he was sure, agree with him that it was the very best agricultural district in the whole of Queensland, and perhaps, also, in the neighboring Colony. It had been acknowledged, by every one who had given it a trial, to surpass all other districts in the growth of wheat and maize. There was also a feature connected with the line of country that must commend itself to the House. The country was very open, and it was not very intricate—there were no steep mountains, deep gullies, or large rivers to cross; and, he believed a railway might be made through it, with as little cost as through any part of the Colony. It was pretty near the Range, so that, even in flood time, there were no great streams to cross by bridges or culverts. He submitted that he might claim, at any rate, the vote of the honorable member for Ipswich (Dr. Challinor), who had placed such a sweeping motion on the paper, and who seemed to have a great desire to change the industrial pursuits of the people of this country, and to do away with the leasing of lands for pastoral purposes. He believed the honorable gentleman should be very glad, indeed, to see such a railway measure carried. If he succeeded in putting an end to leasing lands on the Darling Downs, every acre of that country would then be applied for to be appropriated to agricultural purposes. The railway should be made, if honorable members considered that the general interests of the community depended upon the settlement of an agricultural population on the most suitable parts of those fine table lands, which had been acknowledged to be the granary of Queensland. He (Mr. McLean) believed that if the railway were carried out, we need not import one pound of flour from any neighboring Colony or from any foreign country; for we could have all our cereals, and, indeed, nearly all requisite vegetable necessaries, produced in that district, and made available at once. With the liberal Immigration Bill that had passed the House recently, he deemed it highly desirable that provision should be made for the carrying out of large public works, particularly those works which would facilitate the settling of the immigrants on the lands. There would be a large influx of population

under the new law, and the public works would afford employment to the people who wished to make the country their home, and facilitate their making a good start in the Colony. Therefore, public works ought to be encouraged. He claimed the support of all the members who represented the town of Brisbane; because, so far as its interests were concerned, the proposed railway would confer a greater benefit upon the people of Brisbane than those of any other part of the Colony. Brisbane would command an enormous area of country in the north and north-western districts of New South Wales—to the south of the boundary of this Colony—as well as all the country embraced by the railway within the territory of Queensland; and Brisbane would be the great *dépôt* for commercial purposes for the whole of that country. Further, the railway would open up one of the most splendid fields for immigrants as they arrived that could be conceived, and the Government would have a good answer to the frequent complaint that there was nothing but scrub land available. They would be able to say to the immigrant, "Go by railway to the Darling Downs, and there you will find excellent land without timber, where you will have nothing to do but sow and reap." Before the Speaker put the resolution, he should like to state that the sum set forth was the same that was named in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief of Railways, embodying his estimate of the expenses of making the lines; and that in a conversation with that gentleman the other day, he had understood the line to Warwick was completely surveyed and all the plans quite ready. He (Mr. McLean) believed the Engineer-in-Chief would have been in a position, had the Government asked him, to have laid the plans on the table of the House that day. That gentleman had stated that the deepest cutting on the line was thirteen feet, and the steepest gradient one in seventy-two feet.

Mr. TAYLOR seconded the motion.

Mr. MACKENZIE said the objections he had to the resolution might be put into a very small compass. First, he thought that, if such a motion were admissible, it ought to come from the Government themselves, and not from a private member of the House. Secondly, he objected on principle to the House pledging themselves to the expenditure of a large sum of money long before it was required. It would take three years to complete the railway to Dalby, and two years to complete it to Drayton. If the two branch lines were to be proceeded with simultaneously, it would be two years before the line to Warwick was commenced, or the money was required. He objected that the railway to Warwick should not be commenced before the line to Dalby was completed, for he doubted if the Colony could stand the expense of carrying on two lines at once; and before that time arrived, they

might be in a financial difficulty. The railway might prove a failure. No one could be more desirous that it should be a success than he; yet he thought it necessary to wait till it had proved such beyond a doubt. The Colony might have to try back, and initiate another system. He was not in the least opposed to a railway to Warwick; quite the reverse. It would be seen that he had a motion on the paper for a railway between Maryborough and Gayndah; he would, however, withdraw his motion, if the honorable member (Mr. McLean) would withdraw the motion now before the House. (The honorable member proceeded to remark upon the advantages of the line which he had given notice of his intention to propose—there would be a great deal of traffic upon it, and it would command central Queensland.) He would next refer to the proposed railway between Rockhampton and Westwood, and to the appointment and employment of the Commissioner and Engineer-in-Chief of Railways, who was paid enormously—the arrangement under which he held his position being disgraceful to the department of Lands and Works. The amount he would make was between £60,000 and £70,000; yet half the railways of the Colony were not to be under his charge.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: There is another Engineer-in-Chief in the north. The Engineer-in-Chief in the south would look after the southern railways.

Mr. MACKENZIE: The Commissioner of Railways could, out of his emolument, afford to pay a chief engineer and his staff, and then he would be well paid into the bargain. He would leave the country with a fortune—a sum of money large enough to form half the line between Maryborough and Gayndah.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS said that, so far as the Government were concerned, they did not feel that interest in this matter which they would have felt if the arrangements had progressed further. As to the objections of the honorable member for the Burnett, if he could not understand the Railway Act—and he had often confessed in the House that he did not—he could not understand anything about either the duties of the Commissioner of Railways, or the Engineer-in-Chief, or what their duties ought to be.

Mr. MACKENZIE: A great deal better than you.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: He was very glad to hear the honorable member say so, because from his own observations he (the Secretary for Lands and Works) thought the honorable member knew nothing about the matter. The Engineer-in-Chief for the south-western railway had seen nothing of the north-western line, for he was not the engineer of the north-western railway; there being another engineer in the north. As to the cost of engineering superintendence, he had stated to the House over and over again what it would be; and he

had told the House that the expenses of the engineering superintendence of the railways of New South Wales and Victoria were nearly eight times what they were likely to be in this Colony, or what they had been estimated at. As to the Engineer-in-Chief making too large an amount of money, the income he derived would be in proportion to the number of miles of railway constructed—he would be paid entirely by mileage.

Mr. DOUGLAS: No advance?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: No; he must show his work every month. A larger sum was not being paid to the Engineer-in-Chief of the southern than would be expended on the northern line; because it so happened that the estimate sent down by the Engineer-in-Chief of the northern railway exactly tallied with what was paid on the southern and western line. Although no communication had taken place between those gentlemen, it was a remarkable circumstance that the estimate for engineering superintendence on the northern line was the exact amount that the Government were now paying on the southern line. That was a proof, that the amount the Government were now paying was correct. As to the Maryborough and Gayndah line, the Government had no estimate of the traffic there, and they did not know whether it would pay for a cart to run between those places three times a week. But no doubt in time the Government would make provision for such a line. With reference to the motion before the House, it was not one that the Government could bring forward; because, as regarded the Warwick railway, they were now in the same position that they had been in before he (the Secretary for Lands and Works) moved the House to grant the money for carrying out the northern line; for, as the honorable member (Mr. McLean) had stated, the plans had not yet been forwarded to his (the Minister for Lands and Works) department. It might be that he would receive them, and be able to lay them on the table of the House before the end of the session. He would have no objection to the honorable member for Eastern Downs carrying his motion; but looking at the fact that the Railway Act stated, that the Government could not commence any line until the plans were approved of by the House, the money, if voted, could not be spent.

Mr. TAYLOR supported the motion, and enlarged upon the agricultural capabilities of the Warwick district.

Mr. DOUGLAS thought that there was something in the objection of the honorable member for the Burnett to an independent member of the House bringing forward such a motion as that now before them. However, he had no objection to the abstract question that the expenditure of the money was desirable, and that a railway to Warwick was necessary. He had no objection to any abstract resolution. He agreed with all that had been said,

as to the advantages that would accrue to the Colony from a railway through the Warwick district, to catch all the traffic of the northern part of New South Wales. A railway to the south, where there was the largest amount of population and enterprise, was desirable, and would be beneficial to this Colony. The motion, however, ought to have come from the Minister for Lands and Works, as a responsible Minister, and not from an independent member. He would not say whether he would vote against, or for the motion, till he heard whether or not the Government were prepared to indorse it.

Mr. SANDEMAN most fully appreciated the great benefit the country would derive from opening up a railway traffic from the southern portion of the Colony, and the northern part of New South Wales. He cordially approved of affirming the principle that railway communication should be carried out wherever it could be shown there was a reasonable prospect of railway lines becoming self-supporting; but he also thought that principle should be carried out with impartiality, and that other parts of the Colony, wherever it could be shown the traffic was sufficient to justify the formation of railways, should receive a fair and equal share of support. He was much gratified at the adoption of the resolution of the Minister for Lands, approving of the plans and sections for the line from Rockhampton to Westwood, and with the flattering prospects held out by that honorable member of the ultimate success of that line,—that was an earnest of the sincerity of the Government in promising to act fairly towards the north in this question, without which, he had stated from the beginning, he could not have supported the southern railway policy; and in affirming the principle that the line should be extended to Warwick, he would claim the vote of the honorable member for Eastern Downs (Mr. McLean), and of the Government, and others who might vote with him on this question, for an extension of the line beyond Westwood, wherever it might be considered most desirable to carry it.

Mr. DOUGLAS having called attention to the state of the House,

After the usual notice,

The SPEAKER counted the House, and there being only fifteen members present, and these not constituting a quorum, he adjourned the House at twenty-five minutes past one o'clock till Tuesday next.