

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE 1866**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 27 June, 1866.

Completion of Railway Lines to Dalby, Warwick, and Westwood.—Diseases prevalent amongst Sheep and Cattle.

## COMPLETION OF RAILWAY LINES TO DALBY, WARWICK, AND WESTWOOD.

Mr. STEPHENS moved the resolution standing in his name—

That in the opinion of this House, the large sum required for the construction of railways, as shewn by the present estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief, in excess of the first estimate of those officers, renders it necessary that steps should be taken to secure the completion of the lines to Dalby, to Warwick, and to Westwood, at a cost not exceeding the amounts now voted; and that such alterations be made in the plans, or in the amount of work to be performed, as shall insure this result.

The honorable member said: In moving the resolution standing in my name, I have no object whatever but that of inducing caution. I believe that the resolution as it stands, if adopted by this House, will be of no effect beyond an expression of opinion; but as an expression of opinion from this House, it may have the effect of keeping down the expenditure on these railways. I think, from the manner in which the money was voted on the Railway Bill, there is some reason to fear that this House may be asked for an additional loan for the purpose of railways, unless there is some such expression of opinion as I have suggested. A very brief examination of the facts of the case will render apparent the desirability of this course being adopted. There have been a great many rumors going about with respect to extravagance in the construction of these railways. I shall not go into those rumors, but the few remarks which I shall make will be confined to the reports of the Engineer-in-Chief, which have been laid on the table of the House, and constitute the only authentic information before us. I think I shall be able to shew, from this, that we have reason to fear we shall be called upon to vote another considerable sum before these railways can be constructed. It will be within the recollection of honorable members, that when the railway system was adopted by the House, the chief feature of it was cheapness—that we should adopt a cheap system of railways to run through the interior of this country. A report from Mr. Fitzgibbon, dated July 9, 1863, which was laid on the table of the House, recommended this policy in the construction of the lines from Ipswich to Dalby and Warwick, *via* Toowoomba. I believe I am correct in saying

that the railway system in this colony was adopted by this House on the strength of that report. I shall probably not be guilty of misrepresentation, if I say that the House was willing to accept railways that may be considered of an inferior character, compared with those of general use elsewhere, in consideration of the reduced cost—or, in other words, that speed and power were sacrificed in order to reduce the cost of the construction. It was thought wise to undertake some cheap plan, and though speed and power were sacrificed, still there was reason to believe that we should have a railway calculated to be of sufficient practical use for some time to come, and of great benefit to the colony, at a considerably reduced cost. That we shall have a railway of this inferior character, I have no doubt—but I fear that we shall not get it at the reduced cost, on the strength of which this system was adopted. I think, therefore, that some steps should be taken to keep the expenditure within the original, or, rather, the present estimate; and the House should take care that we do not allow these lines to cost more than one of the heavier lines might have been constructed for. In the original report of the Engineer-in-Chief, we have an estimate that the line from Ipswich to Dalby, with a branch to Warwick, might be constructed for one million and a quarter. Mr. Fitzgibbon submitted this estimate with the full conviction that it would be found ample. Honorable members will bear me out that at that time it was taken for granted that this estimate was ample, and that was a very great inducement to the House to authorise the work, and to pass the railway vote. We have been since called upon to vote an increase of one-third on that amount, or £432,000 additional, for the completion of the lines in the southern districts; and I fear that we are in danger of being called upon to vote a still further sum. In this report—on the faith of which our railway system was adopted—Mr. Fitzgibbon says, if the traffic had been large, he would at once have recommended the construction of a railway of not less than four feet eight and a half inches; but as, perhaps for the next twenty years, only a comparatively moderate amount of traffic may be looked for, and that—

“The object to be accomplished should be, while sufficiently providing therefor, as well as for a reasonable increase of it, to open up the country at the minimum of capital outlay.”

Now, I regret to state that although this was the system which the Government was pledged to carry out, it appears, in a later report, that the Engineer-in-Chief has changed his mind altogether, and has found that cheapness was not necessary. In the previous report, which this House adopted, the Engineer-in-Chief stated:—

“The permanent way, bridges, and superstructure of the line generally, may be of a much

lighter and less expensive character than would be admissible on a line of broader gauge.”

He now states:—

“It does not follow, as some persons suppose, that because a railway is of a narrow gauge, and its equipment proportionably light, that the structure upon it should be of a less durable character than those usually found on first-class broad gauge lines.”

In other words, it does not follow, because we adopt a narrow gauge, we should have a cheap system of railways; but, on the contrary, the whole of these works should be as expensive as they would be if constructed on the most substantial system. Now, sir, I think this is an error on the part of the Engineer-in-Chief. I will admit, that with regard to earthworks, cuttings, and embankments, there is no difference of cost; but this does not apply to many other things to which the Engineer-in-Chief says they do apply. First, it would follow from this statement that the greater portion of this expenditure is to be incurred in alterations in order to secure greater permanence. But the question is, have we got it? It would then be merely a question of money. I do not think we have it at present; and I do not see any valid reason why such enormous sums should be expended on stations. But, with regard to the alterations, they do not give us that greater permanence, which we are told in this new report we are to have. The wear and tear on a railway is on the rolling stock and on the rails. Now, sir, I cannot see how it can be stated that we can get a strong and substantial railway when we have rails of only thirty-five pounds or forty pounds, instead of sixty pounds or eighty pounds. If we use the lighter article we cannot have permanence; and, therefore, I do not see why we should be called upon to vote an extra half million when we do not get that greater permanence where the wear and tear exist. I am surprised to find, in reference to the £100,000 voted, that it was for the additional cost of the ascent of the Main Range, in reducing the gradient from one in fifty to one in seventy. We are told that this is a great improvement; and that it will enable an engine to take an increased load up the incline. The Engineer-in-Chief says, in his report:—

“The lengthening of the line nine miles in the neighborhood of the Main Range, was caused by altering the Main Range incline from one in fifty—as first intended—to one in seventy, in order to increase the load which an engine could take up it (the increased load is in the proportion of about forty-five on one in seventy, to thirty-two on one in fifty), which will at once be recognized as a great and permanent improvement, affecting the whole line from Ipswich to Toowoomba, and one which it would have been reprehensible in me not to have recommended for adoption.”

I was very much surprised indeed on reading the report, that, although £100,000 had been

expended for the purpose of making the incline less, to find that it had not been reduced—that while it was reduced generally to one in seventy, the steepest gradient was still one in fifty. I do not object to the average line being one in seventy, but I do positively object to any statement being made of this description—that we are making a great improvement, when, by turning to the next page we find it stated:—

“Steepest gradient one in fifty, of which ninety-one chains are continuous. Total length of one in fifty, four miles fourteen chains.”

Where, then, is the permanent improvement? I have no objection to the gradient of one in fifty. I think that when a gentleman in the position of the Engineer-in-Chief, allows such a statement to appear in his report, it is sufficient to induce this House to exercise great caution in the matter of railway expenditure. Again, it is stated that there is a sum of £42,000 to be expended for an additional length of seven miles on the Warwick line. The Engineer-in-Chief, in a special report laid before this House last session, stated that he could not recommend the carrying of the line through Drayton on account of the bad gradients, and that it would be better to go a longer distance. A deviation was therefore made on the line, by which the distance was increased some fourteen miles, in order that an ascent of one in one hundred in the neighborhood of Drayton might be avoided. Here, again, a large sum was thrown away on what the Engineer-in-Chief calls improvements. I have already alluded to the expensive character of the railway stations, and I do trust that the Government will take such steps as will avoid in future the erection of extravagantly expensive railway stations of unsuitable materials. I cannot see why we should import expensive railway stations from England, when we have an ample supply of more durable, and certainly more suitable, material in the colony. I think they ought to be constructed of the materials and with the labor to be found in the colony. There is one other thing in this report which appears to me to be also extremely reprehensible, and that is the statement of the Engineer-in-Chief, that the cost of those lines, 192 miles in length, when fully equipped, will be £1,650,000. We have a right to expect that that statement of the cost shall be something like correct; but a reference to the votes of the House will shew, that instead of £1,650,000, we have been called upon to vote £1,718,000, which is some £70,000 or £80,000 in excess of his statement. This item alone will increase the cost of all the railways in the district by some £400 a mile. Instead of costing £8,600, they will cost £9,000. I refer only to the cost of the single lines. I think we have a right to expect that his statement should be correct. I have shewn

that his statement of the cost of the line is incorrect. Although his figures shew the cost of the line to be £8,600 per mile, I believe that it ought to be set down at a still larger sum. If we go a roundabout way for the purpose of reducing the cost per mile, we increase the cost in another point of view by increasing the distance. The original estimate for the Dalby line, with a branch to Warwick, was for a distance of 174 miles. As the line will now be constructed, it will be 192 miles, making a difference of some eighteen miles. If we take the sum at present voted and divide it by the number of miles, we shall find that the cost per mile will be about £10,000, although the original estimate was that it would cost about £6,000 or £7,000 per mile. In comparing the cost of the New South Wales lines with our own, the Engineer-in-Chief has made a comparison which, I think, is incorrect, namely, that the cost of the New South Wales lines was £19,500 per mile. A reference to the report of Mr. Rae, the Commissioner of Railways in Sydney, will shew that this £19,500 was the average cost of the whole lines constructed in New South Wales, including the double line between Sydney and Parramatta, terminal works, and the enormous sum expended on the Darling Harbor branch, and that these lines were constructed during the gold time, when the price of labor was high. Mr. Rae, in his report, states that the average cost of single lines is about £14,000 per mile. If we are to institute a comparison at all, it ought to be drawn as against our railways. They are now constructing lines in one district at £7,000 per mile, and in another at £8,000 per mile, but this does not include the rolling stock. But if we add that, it will still leave £10,000 as the cost in one district, and £9,000 in another. If the Engineer-in-Chief made these statements for the information of the House, he ought to have drawn the comparison fairly. The impression that his report has left upon my mind is, that he has incurred a large amount of expenditure which he ought not to have incurred, and that an attempt is being made to explain it away. I have shewn that the principle of cheapness, which was adopted by this House, has been departed from, in favor of more expensive and substantial works. This is a departure from the principles adopted by this House. We are told in this report that the cost of these lines, when fully equipped, will be £1,650,000. But out of the whole 192 miles, only about 37 miles are completed; and the most difficult portion of the line is still uncompleted. It is a very common thing for sums to be asked for in excess of the estimate, and I fear we may yet be called upon for a further sum, before the remaining portion of the 192 miles is completed. In the present report, the Engineer-in-Chief has not any very distinct statement that the lines can be completed

for the sum voted. It appears to me that there are several items of probable expenditure that have not been provided for; for instance, we have heard a good deal about a dispute between the contractors and the Engineer, and if the dispute should be decided against the Government, that will have to be provided for. There is another still more serious point which, it appears to me, has not been calculated upon at all. In the thirteenth clause of the report, it is stated that—

“The excuse which the contractors urge for slow progress made with the works is, that in consequence of alterations which it was considered desirable to make in the centre of the line of railway, at several points, after the line was cleared of timber, great delay was necessarily occasioned in the prosecution of the works.”

But that—

“Since the middle of October last, before which time nearly the whole of the alterations were decided upon, there can be alleged no reasonable excuse whatever for their neglect of the works.”

Now, sir, if nearly the whole of the alterations were decided upon before the middle of October last, we may conclude that a pretty considerable number of alterations have been made in the line since the contract was signed. If a contract were signed for a lump sum, alterations were generally regulated according to a schedule of prices, either in increasing or reducing the whole amount, but it very rarely reduced it. We have an admission here, that the alterations are very numerous, and every one of them must necessitate an increase in the original cost of the work. It is a fact generally acknowledged, that when work is paid for according to a schedule of prices, we cannot say what it will cost. We are entirely in ignorance of what this line will cost. There is no sum included in the £422,860 already voted for additional expenditure beyond the amount of the original estimate, to cover the cost of any other alteration or contingency which may occur. Therefore, any other contingencies that do occur will have to be provided for by a vote of this House. On these grounds, therefore, I have reason to apprehend that this House will be called upon to vote another half a million to complete these lines. The original estimate was a million and a quarter—we have voted half a million more—and we may probably be called upon to vote another half a million. I have no doubt that the money will be voted, if it be required to complete the lines. My object in bringing forward this matter is this: I think the financial difficulties which have recently occurred ought to be a warning to this House and to the Government to keep down the expenditure as low as possible; and we ought not to allow the Engineer-in-Chief to be constantly coming forward and asking for additional sums for improvements of one kind and

another. At the best, we shall have only an inferior railway, in point of power and speed, and the particular portion of the line on which the wear and tear takes place will not be improved by the additional expenditure. With regard to the resolution which I have laid upon the table, if I had thought that it would have any practical effect whatever, beyond acting as a warning, I should not have brought it forward, because I feel convinced it is essential that we should complete these lines. I have been informed that the Engineer-in-Chief, while under examination in another place, stated that he would complete the lines for the sum he had named. If they can be completed for that sum no harm will occur from the passing of this resolution. I think we should not have had to vote this additional sum of £422,000 if the House had been consulted before the alterations were made. I think they ought not to have been made before they had obtained the sanction of the House. We have, at all events, voted a sufficient sum to carry on the railway works for another twelve months—till the next session of Parliament; and if, by that time, it may be found necessary to make further alterations and improvements, the Government can get the consent of the House before they are agreed to. The only effect of this resolution, if passed, will be that it will oblige the Government to come down and ask the House for the money before they spend it; instead of first spending it and then coming to ask for it. We have no information as to what is required for the completion of the line, except the engineer's report, which is as unreliable a document as one could wish to see. Although every member of this House who voted for the additional grant of £422,000 did it unwillingly, I think it is necessary for the House to express its opinion that the Government should be cautious in coming down to ask for another grant. I am not aware whether the honorable member the Minister for Lands and Works will agree to this resolution or oppose it; but I think it desirable that it should be put to the House. I would propose its being passed exactly in its present form, but I would have no objection to insert the words “if practicable,” if the House should think it desirable to do so.

Mr. RAFF seconded the resolution.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Personally, I should not have the slightest objection to the resolution being carried, but I trust I shall be able to impress the House and honorable members with the desirability of withdrawing it; because the motion, as it now stands, if carried, would be positively a violation of the Railway Act: for the moment the plans were approved by this House they became, in fact, as much the law as the Act itself—therefore any alteration of those plans would necessitate the passing of another Act of Parliament. But the honorable member,

in bringing forward this motion condemning the Engineer-in-Chief, has done so in a way which I think does not justify the sweeping condemnation which he has arrived at. He has charged the engineer with making unfair comparison between the cost of the works between Ipswich and Toowoomba and the cost of the New South Wales lines; but if honorable members will look at the report of the New South Wales Commissioner of Railways, they will find that the misrepresentation to which the honorable member refers exists more in the report of Mr. Rae than in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief of those railways. In point of fact, there is no misrepresentation in that report at all. It has been asserted in the New South Wales newspapers that the railways in that colony have been made over country far more difficult than that over which the railways have been made in this colony. Now, I maintain that it is nothing of the kind. The railways in New South Wales are made generally over flat countries, and until they get to the Blue Mountains they travel over nothing equal to the Main Range, and they have done nothing as yet equal to the Little Liverpool. I think honorable members must arrive at the conclusion that the money could not have been better expended. It is true that the railways in New South Wales have cost only £14,000 per mile, and that the original amount for our lines here was £6,000 to £7,000, but the line over the Main Range was never estimated to cost less than from £9,000 to £10,000 per mile, and when that difficulty has been got over there will be no difficulty in completing the rest of the line for £6,000 or £7,000 per mile. The honorable member for South Brisbane is quite well aware that the line from Toowoomba to Dalby will be completed for a less sum than that mentioned by Mr. Fitzgibbon, while that at Warwick will not exceed the amount of the estimate. I do not see, therefore, that so far as the permanent way is considered, Mr. Fitzgibbon can be called to account. But the honorable member has referred to the question of the terminal stations, and he maintained that the terminal stations were extravagantly put together, composed of material of an extravagant character, and so expensively put up, that they added materially to the expense of the whole line. I think there must be some misapprehension on this subject. I have seen hand-bills going about, stating that these iron railway stations cost £27,000, and that they were to be put up all the length of the line. I do not know of any such thing. I admit that the station at Ipswich has cost a good deal of money. It has cost much more than I expected, and if the Government had known it would have cost so much, it would not have been ordered from England. The only other iron railway station that I know of, is the one which was ordered for Toowoomba, but that has been countermanded. The

only other iron station at all, is the station at Laidley, which has cost more than I thought it would. I believe that we might have built a station there for one-eighth of the expense, which would have sufficed for all the traffic of that line. Instructions have been given, long ago, that no more iron stations shall be ordered from England. With regard to the line itself, the honorable member for South Brisbane would lead the House to believe that, because the line is a light one, it is of an unsubstantial character, and that, by-and-bye, it will be necessary to make a new line. Now, I am not aware that the honorable member is justified by any information in his possession in arriving at that conclusion. Although the line may be light, it is perfectly substantial; and an engineer, who has gone over the line, has stated that, for a narrow gauge line, it is as substantial a railway as he has ever seen. The honorable member has said that the rails ought to weigh eighty pounds; but it should be recollected that the weight of the rails is regulated by the speed and the weight put upon them; therefore, if you place engines weighing only half, the weight of goods only half, and the speed only half, you cannot have anything like the wear and tear which they have on other railways, because the wear and tear depends upon the weight and speed; therefore, we are justified in arriving at the conclusion, that our line will last as long as the rails on other lines of double the weight. The line has now been at work, day and night, for the last twelve months; and so far as I know, the rails have not exhibited any trace of wear. I have no desire to keep back from the House the impression which exists in my mind. I believe there is no reason to fear that the line will not be completed for the amount voted by the House; but if the arbitration which is now pending between the contractors and the Government should go against us, there is no provision made for such a contingency. But we feel that we shall be successful, or, at any rate, that we ought to be successful. No provision can be made for anything of the kind, because we do not know, in the first place, what claim is to be put forward by Messrs. Peto and Co., and we do not know, in the second place, that the arbitrator is likely to award them anything. Beyond the usual wear and tear of the time, I am not aware that the Government will come down to ask the House for another sixpence to complete the line beyond what has been already voted. If the Government should do so, I shall be very much astonished. The Government do intend, independent of the decision in the arbitration case, to which I have just alluded, to come to some fresh understanding with Mr. Fitzgibbon, with regard to the position which he occupies in relation to the Government. Although he has discharged his duty faithfully and well, and carried out his

contracts to the letter ; yet I do feel that the Government is placed in a false position, in having to deal with a contractor in the capacity of their engineer. I feel that it is placing me in a position which no responsible Minister ought to occupy. It was done for the purpose of economy ; and, although it was economical, in comparison with the expense of establishing a department, still, I think that steps should be taken to establish a department. With regard to the existing contracts, I think they may be arranged on fair and equitable terms. I trust that, after this explanation, the honorable member will withdraw his motion. If the motion were carried, it will effect nothing. It may be a warning to the Government ; but I do not think that the Government are entitled to any warning. It is their duty to be prepared, and to see that the votes of the House are carefully expended ; and if they do not do this, they must submit to the condemnation of the House. I trust the honorable member will withdraw the motion.

Mr. RAFF : I am always adverse to entering into a discussion on any branch of a subject, when there is a probability of its coming before the House in another shape ; but I do think that the honorable member for South Brisbane had good reason for calling the attention of the House to this particular branch of the subject without any delay. Had I drawn up the resolution myself, I believe I should have worded it differently. I would have made it affirm the necessity of taking steps to secure the proper completion of the railways, and of obtaining a reliable estimate of their probable cost. The Minister for Lands and Works must admit that the estimates which have been put before him hitherto have not been reliable estimates. It is always necessary that the Treasurer, to enable him to manage the finances of the colony, should have reliable estimates as to the cost of carrying on these expensive works. The honorable member for South Brisbane states that he only wished to bring the matter before the House to secure an expression of its opinion ; and, although the honorable the Minister for Lands and Works thinks they are not entitled to any expression of opinion, I think it is the duty of the House to caution the Government ; and if it be given without any feeling of obstructiveness, he should be thankful for it. It would be a serious matter for the colony ; and I think that no Government could suffer a greater disgrace, than that which would follow from their placing the colony in a financial fix. That, above everything, ought to be carefully avoided ; for there is nothing calculated to bring greater discredit on the colony or disgrace on the Government. The resources of the colony are great and elastic ; and, therefore, any Government which brought the affairs of the colony into a state of confusion, would deserve severe reprobation.

So much for the necessity for the Government to secure reliable estimates, and to take care that the expenditure they sanction is an expenditure they have the means of providing for. I have said that steps should be taken for the proper completion of the line ; and, notwithstanding what has fallen from the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works, as to the sufficiency of the forty pound rail, I very much question if honorable members can consider the laying of that rail a proper completion. At any rate, it is contrary to the opinion I have had from engineers on the subject. I have myself great doubts as to its being a proper completion, notwithstanding what has been stated, and I also doubt if it is an economical thing to do. If seventy pound rails had been put down instead of forty pound rails, the difference might have amounted to about £500 per mile. Well, that might, at the first view, appear to be a considerable additional cost ; but if it should become necessary, in a year or two, to replace the rails, it will be seen that it would have been a saving to have laid down the heavier rails in the first instance. The inconvenience would not be so great if there were a double line of rails, because the traffic could still be carried on, but as there is only a single line of rails, the traffic will have to be stopped while the rails are being replaced. It will, therefore, be evident, that where there is only a single line of rails, every care should be taken to have the line properly constructed in the first instance. I think that is all there is any need for me to say on the question before the House. The question as to whether there is blame or not to be attached to the Engineer-in-Chief should not be alluded to at present. It has been stated, that there should be a select committee to inquire into the matter ; and the House ought at the present time to confine its attention to the necessity of obtaining reliable estimates, and seeing that in future any lines of railway are completed in a substantial manner. The honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works made his assertion very positively, and, as I think, very unguardedly, that the forty pound rails were equal for the purposes of the line to eighty pound rails. Had they been laid on continuous sleepers that might have been the case, but I do not think it is the case where they are laid on transverse sleepers. For my part, I think the honorable gentleman should have had the opinions of other engineers than the Engineer-in-Chief, that the forty pound rails are as good as eighty pound rails would be, before he made such a positive statement as he has made on the subject.

Mr. DALRYMPLE said he hoped the honorable member for South Brisbane would not act on the suggestion that had been made to him to withdraw the motion, but that he would persevere with it ; and if it should be

pressed to a division he would support him, and the more especially as a few days ago, when a committee was moved for to inquire into railway matters, it was refused, but by a majority of only two. The appointment of such a committee was absolutely necessary; and though there was another motion on the paper for the appointment of a railway committee, he had no confidence that it would be carried, either. He had a full conviction that when that motion was brought forward the previous question would be moved on that occasion also, and the country would be again denied an inquiry as to the expenditure of nearly three millions of capital. Now, if that was to be the case, in the name of all that was honest and straightforward, let them, to the best of their power, so bind the hands of the Government that they would not be able to spend the money in a wholesale manner, and on the mere word of one Minister of the Crown. He should be happy to support the motion of the honorable member, but he would suggest to him to make an alteration in it that would only do justice to a portion of the colony which was not in the habit of receiving justice from the House. The honorable member, in his motion, said that the present estimate of the Engineers-in-Chief was in excess of the first estimate of those officers. Now he begged to inform the House that the Engineers-in-Chief, in the plural, had not made such an estimate. He believed that the first estimate sent in by the Engineer-in-Chief for the northern line, from Rockhampton to Westwood, was made previous to the line being surveyed, and therefore previous to its being possible to give anything like a correct estimate. The Engineer for the Northern Railway gave what was an approximate estimate only, but he could not give a correct estimate, or anything like one, as no survey had been made; and so the vote passed for that line was, as it were, merely a vote to account. The vote this year was the only vote that was given on the absolute estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief of the Northern Railway. He might also remark to the House that it was possible a further sum of a few thousands of pounds might be required for the completion of the railway to Westwood; but the expenditure of that sum would only be necessary in consequence of what was referred to by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, who stated that the rails adopted by the Government were of too weak a nature, and too light a description; and the Engineer-in-Chief for the northern line would find it necessary—to make his line a substantial one—to add a third more sleepers than he originally intended should be laid down. The honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works had stated that the rails on the southern line were not too weak, but the honorable gentleman would find, on further inquiry, that that was not correct; for, owing to the distance the sleepers

were apart, and the lightness of the rails, there was a plunging motion, which was produced, he believed, from the rails springing under the carriage, which must be very detrimental to the rolling stock and other material. He believed the Engineer-in-Chief would be perfectly right, if he made the work as substantial as possible, at the first, though it should cost a few thousand pounds more than he estimated it would cost. He would suggest to the honorable member for South Brisbane, to amend his motion, by substituting the word "engineer" for "engineers" and striking out the words "and to Westwood." If the honorable member would do that, he would support the motion, for he believed it was absolutely necessary there should be an inquiry made as to the present state of the railway works of the colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Government could not be surprised that a motion, of the nature of the one tabled by the honorable member for South Brisbane, should have been tabled, under the circumstances in which they found themselves, in connection with the railway works, and the expenditure of the colony, as these had been shewn to the House; but he trusted, with the honorable member at the head of the Government, that the honorable member for South Brisbane would not think it necessary to press the motion. He thought it must have escaped the recollection of the honorable member that, during last session—nearly at the close of the session—a resolution was passed, the effect of which would meet the object of the honorable member in tabling the motion now before the House. He thought it was on the motion of the then honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Blakeney, that a resolution was passed, to the effect that no sum of money should be spent by the Government on any work, beyond the amount voted for such work, without first obtaining the permission of the House. Now that, he thought, was exactly the object of the present resolution; and such being the case, the resolution passed last session should be sufficient to satisfy the honorable member, especially after the discussion which had now taken place and the opinions which had been expressed. He must say that he was a little surprised at hearing the allusion made by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, to what he called the disgraceful position that any Government—and he thought the honorable member alluded to the present Government in particular—the disgraceful position a Government must find themselves in at being the cause of bringing about a financial difficulty, which ought never to be done by any Government under any circumstances. But the honorable member had not recollected that no financial confusion or financial difficulty had been brought about by the action of the Government, that was not in the first instance authorised by the House. It was not possible for the Govern-

ment, because votes were passed by the House, and the sale of debentures authorised, as a matter of course to sell those debentures; and any confusion, if any had arisen, must be from the non-sale of the debentures. He submitted, then, that there was nothing in the position of the colony, beyond the position of any other colony or country, to lead to the belief that their debentures were not as liable to be refused in the English market as those of any other country. As it was only on that ground any confusion could arise, no blame could be shewn on that head to be due to the Government. Much stress had been laid on the supposition—and it was at present only a mere matter of opinion, and one that had not been shewn to be the opinion of professional men on the subject—that the rails were too light. Now he thought it had been well and clearly shewn by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, that light traffic and the absence of speed in the same degree, required only light rails. It had not been shewn by honorable members opposite that the rails were out of proportion, or disproportionately light to the lightness of the rolling stock, the lightness of the traffic, and the rate of speed. Up to the present time, therefore, he submitted there had been no case shewn against the Government.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: I simply mentioned the probable effect of heavy traffic.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: If the traffic were as heavy, and the speed as great, as a broader gauge allowed, the lightness of the rails would be insufficient; but as that was not the case, they were quite sufficient, and he had not heard one professional opinion to the contrary. He thought the honorable member for South Brisbane would find that it was quite sufficient to have brought this matter before the House, and he trusted that he would now think fit to withdraw it.

Mr. PRING said he hoped the honorable mover would not adopt the suggestion which had been made, that he should perform the farce of placing a motion on the paper, making a speech upon it, and then withdrawing it, because the honorable the Premier, or the honorable the Treasurer asked him to do so. He thought the honorable member should shew he was sincere in putting the motion on the paper, and that he should not withdraw it, unless some good reason were shewn that he should do so. He could tell the honorable member that if he pressed his motion he would have the support of honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. The remarks made by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, were, he thought, quite correct, and very much to the point; and he did not think the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had satisfactorily answered them. He entirely coincided with the remark made by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, that it would be a disgrace to any Government to place the colony

in a financial difficulty; and he could not put it down, as the honorable the Treasurer had done, to the non-sale of debentures. Why, when the Government asked the House the other day to pass a Loan Bill they had no debentures to sell.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The honorable member is mistaken.

Mr. PRING: They were all mortgaged; or at any rate they were all contracted for, and the Government had not a sixpence in the bank. They had to rush the Loan Bill through the House, and had to send to Sydney for a banker to accept the debentures that were authorised to be issued, because they had not a penny. It might be owing to the non-sale of debentures now, but it could not be owing to the non-sale of debentures then, because they were not printed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He did not admit that there was financial confusion, and he did not admit that the confusion, if any existed, was owing to the non-sale of debentures. What he said was, that if any confusion did arise, it must be from the non-sale of debentures, and not from the conduct of the Government.

Mr. PRING said he only quoted the honorable member's own words. He did not say there was any confusion in the Government affairs, though he had heard there was a great deal of confusion. As he understood the honorable the Treasurer, the difficulty or confusion, if any existed, would arise from the non-sale of debentures. But there were no debentures to sell till the Loan Bill was passed. But he maintained that the Government was in a financial difficulty when the Loan Bill was before the House, and honorable members were told that the Government was in such a difficulty that if the Bill were not passed the public works would have to be stopped, and several thousand people would be thrown out of employment. Any financial difficulty that might have existed was not owing to the non-sale of debentures, for the Government had none to sell. But they had plenty now. It would not be right for any Government to place the country in a financial difficulty, and if honorable members could prevent the Government from placing the country in a financial difficulty it was right they should. He fully agreed with what was said by the honorable member for South Brisbane on the subject. That honorable member put the matter in a fair light, and, as it appeared to him, the honorable member did not bring forward the motion for the purpose of embarrassing the Government. He did not know if the House could control any expenditure of money in reference to contracts entered into by the Government, for the estimates were framed in accordance with those contracts, and the contracts might have been signed, and they usually included a schedule for extras. An engineer might give an estimate of extras, but as the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works had

said, it was impossible he could calculate, before the signing of the contract, what amount would actually be required for extras, because the necessity for many of the extras only became apparent as the work progressed. For instance, where a tunnel was required, it would be impossible, until it was opened up, to say positively whether it would require to be lined or not. That could not be known at the time of the signing of the contract, nor, though it were known that it would require to be lined, could it be known positively what kind of lining would be required. In such cases the cost of extras was generally regulated by a schedule of prices. Such being the case, the House could not control the Government in that respect; and, consequently, he thought the resolution in that respect might go too far. The resolution, he thought, should not be confined to the Warwick or Dalby line; but, if it were meant for a warning to the Government, should refer to any line that might be made afterwards. He did not know much about the construction of railways, and he believed there were other honorable members in a like position with himself in that respect. He, therefore, thought that if a committee to inquire into the railway affairs of the colony, as moved for the other night, had been appointed, it would have been able to solve a great problem, and might have enabled honorable members to get rid of many difficulties which were resting on their minds. But the House did not concur in the motion for the appointment of such a committee; and so he supposed there would not be one this session. As to the rails, the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works had been informed by his Engineer-in-Chief as to requisite weight of the rails, and no doubt the honorable gentleman was imbued with the opinion that the Engineer-in-Chief was correct. Now, he must say, it appeared to him unlikely that the Engineer-in-Chief would admit to the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works that he had constructed a line with a forty pounds weight rail improperly, because, if he admitted that a forty pounds weight rail was not sufficient to carry the carriages, he would be admitting that he had committed another mistake, and had misled the Minister for Lands and Works by an error of judgment in that respect, as he appeared to have misled him in others. Therefore, if the opinion of the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works was derived from that source, he (Mr. Pring) should be disposed to look upon it with some degree of caution. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had asserted that no professional man or engineer had given a contrary opinion. Now, he could inform the honorable gentleman that he had the opinion of a man who had had thirty-six years experience in the construction of railways in England. That person had told him that the great defect in the lines was, that the weight of the rails was only

forty pounds instead of sixty pounds. That, he said, was the great fault of the line. It was not an oscillating motion, he understood, that was produced, but a vibratory motion, so that when a person was sitting in a carriage, he was bumped up and down, and that arose from the rails not being of sufficient weight to carry the carriages. He agreed that where there was a light traffic, and light carriages and engines, rails of forty pounds weight might do; but the present question was, whether a rail of forty pounds weight on the Southern and Western Railway were rails calculated to bear the weight of the carriages and engines running on that line. That was the question; and a man who had had an experience in the construction of railways in London and other places, extending over thirty-six years, had told him they were not—that they were too light,—that that was the great defect of the line, and he must say that he believed it.

Mr. HERBERT said that, as he was instrumental, by the amendment he brought forward, in preventing the motion from being carried for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the way in which the railways were being carried out, he thought he should state that he did not wish the House to believe he was not of opinion the committee should be appointed, or that the House should not take notice of those matters frequently. As to this and other matters of importance, which the House had to deal with, he thought a motion, such as the one now before the House, might be carried without embarrassing the Government; and he felt satisfied that the honorable member for South Brisbane, in bringing forward this motion, did not do so with the view of embarrassing the Government, for he had submitted his motion in moderate terms and had couched it in moderate language. He did not think that if such a motion were passed, it would embarrass the Government; but, on the other hand, he must say that he did not think it was definite enough, or that it was couched in such language that it would do much good. He thought the House would have to pay more regard to such matters, and assume a closer inspection of the expenditure of the colony, than they had hitherto done. He had felt that the estimates for such works should be placed more in detail before the House before they were gone into, and he should still like to have some of the estimates for railway works placed in detail before the House. He should still like, for instance, to have an opportunity of voting as to the amounts that should be expended for wayside stations, as well as for lock-ups and gaols. He admitted that he was to some extent culpable, for insisting that some of those things which were now complained of should be done, but he did not see it at the time. He, however, found that they should not place full reliance on the reports of an

Engineer-in-Chief. He had no doubt as to the ability of the Engineer-in-Chief, but he thought it must be admitted that his reports, from time to time, did not read well together. He hoped the honorable gentleman who had the immense responsibility of those works on his shoulders, would consult the House more frequently as to the details of the works than he had hitherto done, and he was sure, if he did so, he would receive the support of the House. He also thought they should be more particular, rather than less particular, as to the way they spent the money they borrowed than they were with the expenditure of the general revenue. When they had to borrow three millions of money, were they to allow an Engineer-in-Chief to recommend large increases from time to time without checking them in any way? He thought it was not fair to the Government that it should be so. He was glad his honorable friend the Secretary for Lands and Works had stated that at no distant day he should have the Engineer-in-Chief responsible to the Government. He did not deny the competency of the gentleman who had taken charge of those works, or that he had done his work well; but in the carrying out and the oversight of such works, the Government must have some person properly responsible to them, even though it should cost £10,000 a year. He did not think they should even grudge that for a person who would properly advise the Government in all such matters. He could not think that any one who held the position of a contractor was the proper person to advise the Government as to such works, for he naturally had his own interest at heart. He must say that he differed, and that considerably, from the Engineer-in-Chief, as to the so-called improvements he had made on his line; and he believed that, even at the present stage of the proceedings, the works between Toowoomba and Dalby and between Toowoomba and Warwick, might be considerably cheapened. He saw no difficulty as to the gradients, for he did not see that they need be so low as they were. They could reduce the number and the extent of those gradients, and so reduce the quantity of earth that would have to be removed. Then they might have small wayside stations built of hardwood slabs instead of large stations built of expensive materials; and, as in America, they might do away with the expense of fencing in outlying districts. He must say that he felt somewhat strongly on that point, as he felt that such fencing was not so much fencing in the line exactly as it was fencing in other people's property. If the occupiers of land for grazing purposes along the lines of railway wished to protect their stock from danger, by getting on to the line, they ought to erect the fence or bear the expense of its erection. If the lines were fenced in, the grass would be allowed to grow within

the fences, which would increase the danger of fires, by sparks from the engine, which might spread over the adjacent lands and cause great destruction. And, further, if they fenced in the lines, they secured the drivers in driving at an improper speed, from the danger of obstructions on the line, and, therefore, with more safety to themselves. If a small rate of speed were adopted, the light rails which were laid down might be sufficient, but he was afraid that the trains were driven at a high rate of speed. He thought that for a rate of about fifteen miles an hour, the rails might be sufficient; that, and for the traffic, they were fully adequate at that speed. The motion felt in the carriages was an indication that the trains could not be driven at the rate they were usually driven at. He had obtained considerable experience in England in railway matters, having lost some money in connection with railways at home, and having read piles of papers about them, he could tell the House, on the strength of his own experience, that in more densely peopled districts than any in this colony, the railways to agricultural districts did not run at higher speed than thirteen or fourteen miles an hour; and the wayside stations were nothing like those that had been put up by the Government here. A small platform was erected to enable persons to get up or go down, and at some stations, for persons wishing to be taken up, the train was stopped by a signal-flag. If they did not reduce the rate of speed at which the trains were being driven, they would soon very largely increase the expense, and the rails would also require continual renewal. He knew that it did not come from him so well as from the Engineer-in-Chief to state all that, but he knew well how those matters he had referred to would tell on the expense. If the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works would consult the House frequently on those matters, he would find it to his advantage, and it would not be much trouble to him to bring the estimates before the House. By doing so he would relieve himself from a great deal of responsibility, and if anything went wrong, as to excessive expenditure hereafter, he would have good grounds for taxing the House itself with part of the responsibility of it.

MR. RAFF said he wished to make a short explanation as to a remark that had been made by the honorable the Treasurer. That honorable gentleman had accused him with saying that the Government were in a financial difficulty. Now, he wished to say that he did not make such a statement. He did not say whether the Government were, or were not, in a financial difficulty. What he said was, he thought it was only fair to assume that there was danger—if not probability, there was possibility—of the Government getting into such a difficulty. From the remarks which had been made by the honorable the Treasurer, that if the Government

did get into a difficulty, it would be the fault, not of the Government, but of the House, it became more the duty of the House to see that such a difficulty was avoided.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS said the Government might not, perhaps, be in a financial difficulty, and if they were, the honorable the Treasurer said it was caused by the House, as the expenditure was sanctioned by the House. Now, if so, the House should be careful not to sanction anything of the sort again. It would appear that the Government had a great objection to receive any intimation or caution from the House; but preferred to act on their own responsibility. The House knew the result of the motion of the honorable member for Maryborough for a committee of inquiry into the railways. The same result, he presumed, would attend the similar motion standing in the name of the honorable the Premier. But even if it should be carried, the honorable members who were named on the committee were not members he felt that would give satisfaction to the House. It appeared to him, that if the committee should be appointed in the way proposed, it would be something like a secret committee for the concealment of what should go forth to the public. Every member who was named for the committee had been a party to the construction of the railways, and was, therefore, of course, in some degree or other responsible for the financial difficulty into which the Government had fallen. The honorable member for West Moreton, the late Colonial Secretary, had made reference to the kind of station houses that should be erected. Now, there was nothing with respect to which an inquiry was more necessary, for they found that in some districts large station buildings had been put up as ornaments, merely to please some honorable members of the House. He believed the heavy expenditure on the station at Ipswich would never have taken place, but for the purpose of securing the votes of some honorable members for that town. Now, the like of that should be cried out against as much as possible. If the motion before the House were carried, it might have this effect that it would obtain some information for honorable members—something for them to go on at a future time. If the committee proposed to be moved for by the honorable the Premier should be appointed, no proper investigation would take place, and nothing would come of it. No satisfactory account would be given by it as to the railways to the House, or to honorable members, by which they might be guided at a future time. He hoped the honorable member for South Brisbane would press his motion, and if it came to a division he would support him.

Mr. ROYDS suggested to the honorable mover that he should withdraw the concluding words—“And that such alterations

be made in the plans, or in the amount of work to be performed, as shall ensure this result.”

Mr. SANDEMAN said, that if the honorable mover would consent to the suggestion of the honorable member for the Kennedy, Mr. Dalrymple, he should be prepared to vote for the motion. The suggestion was that the word “engineer” should be inserted in the place of the word “engineers,” and that the words “and to Westwood” should be struck out. The honorable member at the head of the Government had said, that if this motion were agreed to, the Government would be compelled to violate existing contracts. Now, it appeared to him that existing contracts had been violated already, because the Government had gone to a much greater expense than was originally intended. The contracts had been increased to a very considerable extent, as could be proved by a reference to the votes of the House. He did not mean to condemn the excess of expenditure so long as it could be shewn that it was necessary, but he did object to the additional expense being gone into before the House was made aware of its necessity, and before they had an opportunity of deciding on it. Honorable members had never till the present session been made aware that such a large amount would be required, in addition to the original amount. As to the question of the very large expense which had been spoken of, with regard to railway stations, the honorable member at the head of the Government admitted that he was lead into error in that matter, and had stated that if he had known such a large sum had been required he would not have sanctioned the erection of such stations. Now that was a very fair way of meeting the question. To admit the error was a very fair way of meeting the difficulty, but it did not absolve the Government from the responsibility. They should have had sufficient control over the executive officer, and have had a better notion of what they were doing, than to have involved the country in so large an expense as they would be obliged to pay for. The honorable member had also admitted, very fairly, the false position in which they were placed, in having an Engineer-in-Chief who was a contractor. It was a monstrous reflection, that in a young colony, where economy was most rigidly required, they should run into enormous expense on the representations of a contractor, when, if a greater supervision and a different system had been adopted in the carrying out of the contracts, a considerable sum of money might have been saved. He did not say it was so absolutely, but it was always possible, under such a system; and he did say that the House could not but denounce the principle as a wrong one, that they should have had, during the carrying out of those large works, a gentleman, however high his character and

his ability might be, in the false position of being both Engineer-in-Chief and contractor. He believed that was, perhaps, the great gist of the question. Upon it the onus of the whole matter rested, and if they had really not been placed in the position they now felt themselves placed in, as regarded the Engineer-in-Chief, a great deal of what they required to investigate might have been avoided. He quite agreed in the opinion expressed by the honorable member, who said that the whole of the responsibility of a great subject like this should not be left on the Engineer-in-Chief. The Government were responsible for all that had been done, and the only way the Government could protect themselves in a matter of this kind was by having such supervision over the acts of their executive officers, as would free themselves morally from the responsibility they naturally incurred. He believed it had been said the Engineer-in-Chief had complained that he had been made responsible to a greater extent than he should have been, and that the Government declined to take the amount of responsibility they should have taken. If that were correct, it furnished another reason why he should not be held responsible solely; and that again threw the real responsibility back upon the Government. He was rather surprised to hear the honorable member for West Moreton advocate that the railway lines might be very well carried out without fencing. He could not, for a moment, understand how, in a country like this, where a great part of the railways ran into bush country, where there was stock straying in every direction, and where cattle travelling were liable to cross the lines day and night, people could with safety travel on the railways, unless the lines were fenced in. Not long ago, a train coming from Grandchester to Ipswich had a very narrow escape from a serious, if not fatal, accident, from a stray bullock getting upon the line late in the evening. The railway trains running through bush country at night would expose the passengers to many and serious risks, if the lines were not fenced in. While on that subject, he must say that he thought a great deal of unnecessary expense had been incurred by the adoption of wire fencing. He thought that, in a country like this, where the timber was to be had for the mere cutting down, it would have been better to have erected three-rail fences, which would have kept out stock better than wire fences. The erection of such fences would also have had this effect, that it would have given employment to a large number of persons who were said to be going about the streets of Brisbane and Ipswich without employment. He thought that, in every point of view, it would have been desirable to have adopted a description of work that would have employed a large amount of labor. He believed that something had been

said about the defectiveness of the southern lines, as regarded the rails. He had been told that the engineer of the northern line, who had inspected the southern line, was of opinion the sleepers were placed too far apart, and that that was the reason of the peculiar motion which had been spoken of by some honorable members. It was, consequently, he believed, the intention of that gentleman, with regard to the northern lines, that that defect should be avoided. That was another reason why they should have the railway works supervised by others than those who had a direct interest in their construction. He thought that, by the adoption of the motion before the House, they would be able to arrive at some beneficial results on this subject; and he thought it was the duty of honorable members, as so much agitation had taken place on the subject, not to object to any proposition that was likely to throw further light on this important question.

Mr. WALSH said he was sure that, whatever might be the vote on the motion before the House, honorable members would feel under some obligation to the honorable mover for having brought on such an instructive debate as they were getting into. So far as he could make out, in the estimation of the present and of the late Premiers of the colony, the railway policy had been a series of blunders, from beginning to end; and if confessions were to be taken as atonements for those blunders, both honorable gentlemen were prepared to make any amount of them. But it appeared to him, that where so much money had been spent, something more than confessions was required. He thought that honorable members, who had taken such an important part themselves in the furtherance of the Government schemes of those railways, were also blameable with the Government, and should also get up and make their confessions. When honorable members, including the Government, had made a clean breast of it, and when the House understood all the errors, he was prepared to admit it might be possible to set about a rectification of them, and then an understanding of the real meaning of the motion before the House might be arrived at. With the mistakes only half confessed, he must say he did not see the real meaning of the motion. He was prepared to think that the honorable mover had something else in view than what appeared on the face of the motion. Notwithstanding the excellence of his remarks, he was not sure that he saw the real drift of them. He was not convinced that the honorable mover of the motion intended to reflect on the Government for what they had done; though his remarks tended to shew that they had committed blunders, and had not taken due caution; and, further, that he had not sufficient confi-

dence in the Government because they had not taken sufficient caution. But still he could not draw an inference from the remarks of the honorable member, more than he could from the motion itself, that he really intended the House should censure the Government for their mistakes, or interfere in any decided manner, in order to prevent similar mistakes in future. Now, he thought the honorable mover should tell the House what he really meant—whether the motion was intended as a vote of censure on the Government for what they had done, or as a kind of white-washing of honorable members themselves who had assisted in these matters, so as to enable them, when they went back to their constituents, to say to them,—“See what we have said and done on this subject.” He thought the honorable member, in justice to his constituents, should have uttered his remarks of that evening when the Loan Bill was recently before the House. That would have been the proper time for the honorable member to have made the unanswerable speech he had just made. But no; the honorable member did not then favor the House with all the information he possessed: but when the railway question was an old one, and when every one was sick of it, and when the Government were placed in a position to carry on as they had been doing, the honorable member came forward and made the best speech that had been made during the session. Now he did not think that that was the right way to treat the House, and he complained of it for that reason. The remarks of the honorable member appeared to him to be of great value; and whether the motion were carried or not, he trusted his remarks would be correctly published, for they would be of great value to honorable members, and to all who took an interest in the railway affairs of the colony. They would enable people out of doors to understand those matters in a much clearer way than they could possibly have done before. He was rather astonished that some honorable members, who felt disposed to agree with such a motion now, did not see the necessity of enforcing some such principle as the one expressed in the motion when the other railway discussion took place lately; particularly when the question of the Toowoomba and Warwick line was before the House. He asked the honorable the Premier—who now admitted there were many mistakes on his part, and that he had not exercised due watchfulness—he asked him now why he did not assist the House in preventing the expensive works for the Toowoomba and Warwick line? for he might at least have said to the House that they ought not to go on with those works at present, but wait a little, and call for fresh tenders, when it might be possible to exercise more economy. That was the course the honorable member should have pursued. Why did the honorable gentleman not assist the House in

checking the system of what he might call mis-railway making? The honorable gentleman was now counselling the House to adopt a much cheaper and more economical—and probably, for the country, more suitable—system; but why did he not assist the House by such an argument when the Warwick line was under consideration, and endeavor to have the construction of that line stopped till the Government were induced to begin a fresh system of railway making? Those were inconsistencies which struck him very forcibly; and he could not help complaining that the views he and others entertained on this subject, and advanced on a previous occasion, though perhaps not in so clear and telling a manner, were the views that were held by honorable members who opposed them on the previous occasion. The objection taken to the motion by the honorable member for the Kennedy, Mr. Dalrymple, ought, he considered, to have some weight. There was no proof, he believed, before the House, that the estimates prepared by the Engineer-in-Chief of the Northern Railway had proved to be fallacious. He believed they were supposed to be in excess, by something like £6,000; and that, in comparison with the gross blunder on the western line, was as nothing. He thought, therefore, that as that officer had shewn he was capable of preparing estimates, and carrying out the work within his estimates, he should not be trammelled, nor should he be subject to any reflection, as would be the case if the motion were carried in its present shape. He thought, under the circumstances, that the Engineer-in-Chief of the northern line should be looked upon as a very superior officer. He was not able to prove if all that was said by the honorable the Treasurer, as to the financial position of the colony, at a late period, was correct. He certainly was led to think, by the way the Loan Bill was forced through the House, that the Government were financially in a state of confusion; and, considering that the Bill was hurried through in a most indecorous manner, it was too much to say to the House now that there was no financial confusion. When the Bill was before the House, they were told that so urgent was it, that if it were not passed the public works would have to be brought to a standstill, and a great many people would be thrown out of employment. He thought that when the Government cheques were not duly honored at the bank, something like a financial difficulty was shewn.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. WALSH: Well, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer would not say that the Government cheques had been duly honored; and while that was the case, it was rather too much for him to get up, and use as an argument that which honorable members were unable to swallow. The admission which had been made of the gross extravagance that had been committed at some of the wayside

railway stations, might be taken as an index that more economy and knowledge would be displayed for the future; and, so far, it would afford satisfaction to the country; for it was, no doubt, a candid, and honest, and useful admission, when it was made so freely and frankly as it had been made by the honorable the Premier. The only difficulty in his mind now was as to what was to be done with the motion before the House. He should like to vote for it if he thought it would be of any use to the country; and he would even vote for it if the Government would accept it as a reflection upon them for their past railway policy. He would even vote for it on that ground: but if it were to be of no use; if it were to be only one of those wishy-washy motions that had no meaning in them, and were intended in some way to relieve the Government from some impending difficulty, he would not assist in carrying it, or be a party to it. He would not, therefore, decide how he should vote on the motion till he heard the explanation the honorable the mover would make in the course of his reply, as to what was the real nature of his motion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he thought his honorable colleague the Secretary for Lands and Works might well exclaim, "Save me from my friends," when they were on the other side of the House. The complaints made by honorable members opposite as to the railway policy of the Government came from them with a very bad grace, seeing that those honorable members were as chargeable as his honorable colleague with all the sins of the railway policy. He was not desirous of prolonging the debate, for he believed that every useful purpose had been accomplished that would be accomplished by any further discussion. His honorable colleague had said that it was his intention to curtail the heavy expenditure in connection with the railways, and he thought that, with such assurance, the House might be satisfied. For his own part, he thought the proposed expenditure of all large sums of money by the Government should be strictly revised by the House; and he did not think the Government should be over sensitive as to any discussion that might be fairly raised as to the expenditure of those sums. It would, he was sure, be a great assistance to his honorable colleague to have the assistance of the opinion of the House in such matters; and it would not be objectionable to him if the House would share the responsibility with him, and give him the benefit of their advice. But he could not agree with the honorable member for the Leichhardt, Mr. Sandeman, when he said the responsibility should be shifted from the shoulders of the Engineer-in-Chief and placed wholly on the shoulders of the honorable the Secretary for Lands and Works. Very varied indeed must be the attainments of a Minister of the Crown, if he

were to be responsible for all the practical details in his department.

Mr. SANDEMAN: What he said was, that the responsibility of the railway policy rested with the Minister at the head of the department; and that railway policy was, of course, included in the details.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Oh!

Mr. SANDEMAN: Well, the arrangement or administration of the details.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He believed his honorable colleague would not object to accept the responsibility, as he had the honor of initiating the railway policy; but if he were to be responsible for all the details—for the construction of a locomotive engine, for instance,—

Mr. SANDEMAN: I did not say so, and I hope the honorable and learned gentleman will not put words into my mouth that I did not use.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He was only drawing a fair and logical inference from the honorable member's proposition. If his honorable colleague were to be held responsible for all those things, then he said, Heaven help him, or any one in his position. He maintained that his honorable colleague must not be held responsible for all those things; and when he took the responsibility of superintending the engineer, the engineer must be prepared to accept the full responsibility of the professional advice he gave to the Minister. He thought he might venture to say that his honorable colleague had never interfered with the details. He believed he had been guided by the advice of the gentleman on whose advice the House entered upon the construction of the line, and, therefore, so far he was absolved from the responsibility of those details. Perhaps the honorable member did not mean to push the question of responsibility to the extent his argument went. Still it was perhaps better it should be brought out, so that people out of doors might not think that the honorable member intended his honorable friend should have such responsibility cast upon him.

Mr. SANDEMAN: Not as to the details.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Well, he came next to the question of finance, and he must here remark on the way in which honorable members departed from the question before the House. Not even in discussing the Land Bill could they confine themselves to the subject. He did not wish to lecture honorable members; but he thought it would be well if they could confine themselves to the subject before the House. What, for instance, had the financial difficulties to do with the construction of the railways?

Mr. SANDEMAN: They had everything to do with it. They had to do with future economy.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Well, future economy be it. He agreed with his honorable and learned friend the member for Ipswich, Mr. Pring, when he said the terms of the motion were altogether too rigid, for

it was impossible to see at the outset what extras would be required in the construction of a railway. It was only in the course of construction that many of the engineering difficulties presented themselves. On this subject, they were at present talking without evidence, and it was material they should have evidence in the consideration of it. Evidence was now being taken by a committee appointed by the other branch of the Legislature on the subject, and it might be well that this motion were withdrawn till they had more information on the subject; and till they had more information as to the amount of responsibility his honorable colleague should have taken, and of the responsibility the Engineer-in-Chief and others should have on their shoulders. He, however, believed the discussion, so far as it had gone, would be found to be useful, and he thought he might venture to say, that in future his honorable colleague would be very willing to throw as much responsibility on the House as he could, and relieve himself of as much responsibility as the House would accept. Ministers, as a rule, instead of desiring to take as much responsibility as possible, were rather disposed to shirk it as much as possible; and people generally did not like to take more responsibility than they could help. He thought his honorable friend would be glad to be relieved of responsibility to any extent the House would relieve him of it. Whether his honorable colleague would be satisfied with the motion, he did not know, but he did not think it could be practically carried out. It would be a useful guide, but it did not appear to him that much good would come of it. He agreed with the honorable member for the Leichhardt, Mr. Sandeman, that the fencing in of the railway lines was absolutely necessary for the safety of those who might travel by the railway. It was, no doubt, a very plausible statement that they might do away with a great deal of expense by not fencing in the lines; and he had no doubt the honorable member for West Moreton had well considered the matter before he made such a proposition. It might be well that they could do away with fencing in the lines, but it would be attended with great danger to passengers if the lines were not fenced in in country districts where stock were continually roaming about, for animals would be sure to stray on to the lines and cause accidents to the trains. For the sake of a few thousand pounds, they ought not to expose life and limb unnecessarily to danger, by not fencing in the lines. As to the motion of the carriages, which had been spoken about, he had travelled several times on the line, and he must say that he did not feel the serious jumping of the carriages that had been complained of by some honorable members. The House had also been informed by the honorable and learned member for Ipswich as to what English engineers said about the cause of the motion—

Mr. PRING: He was not an engineer.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Then he might be only a person of much information; and, perhaps, it was not necessary to attach much weight to his opinion. Now, he could give honorable members another view of the case. He had been told that the motion was not at all owing to the rails, but to the way in which the carriages were constructed. They were built on some American principle, and there was something about them, or wanting about them, that caused the jumping motion. It was not at all, he was assured, owing to any defect in the line. He hoped his honorable friend would be satisfied with the discussion that had taken place on the motion, and that he would consent to withdraw it. The latter portion of the motion was, he thought, objectionable, inasmuch as it would not be beneficial if it were carried out. If they were to reduce the amount of work which they had contracted for to be done, or made any serious alterations on the plans, so as to greatly diminish the contract price, the result would be a series of contests as to compensation for the loss of beneficial interest by the reduction of the contract. If a man had a beneficial interest in a contract amounting to £200,000, he would not tamely submit to its being reduced to £150,000. They might, therefore, as well carry out the contract in the way it had been entered upon. They all knew the injury that was done by tinkering with plans; and he did not know but they might expose themselves to more trouble and to more expense if they tried to cheapen the line, than would be incurred by carrying it out; for if they reduced the contract, they would have, as he had said, to make compensation for the reduction of beneficial interest; and if they made any objection to that, they might come off worse.

Mr. GROOM said that he felt inclined to approve of the motion brought forward by the honorable member for South Brisbane on the present occasion, because he thought that there had been a very great amount of mismanagement in connection with the railway policy of this country. Some honorable gentlemen seemed to cast blame upon those members of the House who had supported the Government in their railway policy, and he was quite prepared to take his own share of that blame, which the honorable member for Maryborough seemed to think attached to himself as a supporter of the Government. But, at the same time, he felt that when such admissions were made, and when members were willing to take their share of the burden, some allowance should be made for the influence of the very flattering reports of the engineer, laid upon the table of the House, and having the sanction of the then Government. He must confess that he had heard the admissions made by the honorable member for West Moreton, with very great astonishment indeed. At the same time,

he thought it was a most unfortunate circumstance that the same discoveries, or ideas, had not dawned upon the mind of that honorable gentleman some years ago. It would, perhaps, have saved some £200,000 at least. It did appear somewhat strange that the House had passed, without much scruple, large sums, from half a million and over, up to a million, yet he had known them spend much time in debating whether £200 should be voted for the erection of a country lock-up. With such anomalies, pointed out so clearly by the honorable member for West Moreton, it was worthy of the attention of the House, whether they should not exercise some greater control over the large sums voted for the future. He concurred with more than one of the remarks made by the honorable member for West Moreton, in more respects than one, that the expenditure should be kept within narrower bounds in the matter of railways. That honorable gentleman had suggested that much expense might be saved at the present time, if more care were taken with regard to the expenditure upon the wayside stations of the lines. He might cite, as an instance, the station constructed at Laidley. A person passing that would conclude that the colony must have been over-burthened with money, instead of being encumbered with debt. Such a station would be good enough for Toowoomba, Dalby, or even Ipswich itself; and, indeed, it looked more like a gentleman's villa in England than a railway station, and was scarcely used, except for the supply of fire-wood to the engine. He was also inclined to concur with the honorable member that there was no necessity whatever for these wayside stations at all, except, indeed, a small building, which would cost somewhere about £200 or £300. It would be a good time for that when the country became so well occupied that there would be some returns from such districts. And, he would like to know, when the occupation of the Crown lands there would warrant the erection of such buildings? It was scarcely credible that any great sale would take place there. At Gatton, it seemed, there was the same extravagant idea, in the mind of the Engineer of Roads, and yet very little land was occupied, or was likely to be occupied, for some time to come. Besides, as soon as ever the line reached Helidon, there would be no use for the station; and, again, there was no population that would warrant such an extravagant building there. He doubted whether it would not be better to do away with that station altogether, and with it the staff of officials which would be kept there, with very little or nothing at all to do. He was, however, surprised at another objection which had been urged by the honorable member for West Moreton as an expense that might be spared—that of fencing the line. That expense was really the best and cheapest

portion of the whole railway. Without the fencing, cattle crossing and walking over the line would do very much harm to it. He had seen the effect of the recent rain when passing along the line on the previous day; it had washed away much of the embankment, and he had seen numbers of men employed repairing the damage. If cattle could walk over the line and embankments, the country would be involved in a larger expenditure for repairs than the original cost of fencing in the line. He would ask, if the line were open to the Main Range, what would happen to a train with the tunnels and the cuttings there? What would become of the train and passengers if it encountered a bullock in the way there? Fencing, therefore, was advisable for the protection of the line. They had been told that danger was anticipated on account of the narrowness of the road; for his own part, he was not inclined to concur with that fear, or to put confidence in the exaggerated reports of the vibration spoken of by honorable gentlemen. If they were to go by Cobb's coach between Gatton and Toowoomba, as he himself had done, they would be glad to have the railway completed to escape a second trip. It was almost like sitting in that House, comparatively speaking, to travel by the railway. The road at the Main Range was in a very bad state, and Government would be to blame for all the danger to the traveller. He would much rather take the first trip up the Range by the railway at any time, than hazard his life in Cobb's coach. He was inclined to support the motion before the House. He believed that both the House and the colony, and even the Premier himself, had been misled by the Engineer-in-Chief of Railways. He should be glad to know why the extra expenditure caused by the flood—which might be some reason assigned by the Engineer for that increased expenditure—had not been made earlier known. The report said that, owing to the flood of 1864, there was an expenditure of £100,000 necessitated. What he (Mr. Groom) complained of was, that the information had not been supplied in the session of 1864; the flood took place in March, while Parliament did not meet till April, so that there was ample time for the report to be made. Why, then, with the flood levels easily ascertainable before the House met that year, was not the information that this extraordinary flood would involve an increased expenditure not furnished in the session of 1864? If a reason could be assigned for the information being withheld in 1864, why was it not supplied in the session of 1865? It did seem strange, that the expenditure necessitated in 1864 might have been made known then, and yet the information was not given till the session of 1866, with two sessions interval between. That was one reason for supporting the motion before the House, with a view to

moderate such expenditure. They had no reason to suppose that, after voting £422,860 this session, they would not be called upon for another £400,000 another year. This expenditure should be curtailed, and it was essential that the House should express its opinion in some such way as by the resolution, that the Government might take a proper course to secure that object. With regard to the anomalous position occupied by the Engineer-in-Chief of Railways, he agreed in the remarks which had been made, for that gentleman was both Engineer-in-Chief and railway contractor, as well. It was understood that Mr. Fitzgibbon was at that moment enriched and independent, having gained more from the railway than even Sir Charles Fox, or any other person connected with it. It was, he conceived, a bad thing that such rumors should be in circulation concerning the management of the expenditure on railways. The Engineer-in-Chief was irresponsible in the matter. The Minister for Lands and Works, when entrusted with millions of money to expend upon railways, and when the expenditure of the money was in doubt, told them that the Engineer-in-Chief was responsible. He really would like to know who was responsible in that case? If the Minister for Lands and Works were not, who was? The House was not, for the Railway Bill had been based upon a certain report; but at that time, no one dreamed that the line would cost anything like £10,000 a mile from Ipswich to Gatton; they had then been told that it would cost within £5,000. The admission of the Minister for Lands and Works, that he was dissatisfied with the anomalous position occupied by himself, with regard to the Engineer-in-Chief of Railways, and his opinion that the House and the engineer should be made responsible, made the question of responsibility very important. At present, that gentleman, Mr. Fitzgibbon, was Minister himself, and the responsible Minister. He might spend the money as he liked. He was a contractor and an officer under Government, receiving a salary, and also a commission, that must be paid him by the Government, who had no way of controlling him or bringing him to book in any way at all. He thought the motion introduced by the honorable member for South Brisbane would tend to good results; and the Government could not object to it. It had been admitted that blunders had taken place; costly stations built, where cheaper stations would suffice; and that other works had been gone into, such as might very well have stood over till a population was in the country large enough to warrant the expense of them. He should, therefore, support the motion, thinking that, if carried, it would be productive of much good, and be the means of saving the colony a vast amount of unnecessary expenditure.

Mr. MILES said that, if the honorable member for South Brisbane urged the motion

before the House, he should vote for it. At the same time, he must say that he thought a motion of that sort came from that honorable member with a great amount of suspicion attached to it, especially after the vote he had recently given in favor of the loan for a further extension of the Southern and Western Railway. He might say that the very same remarks applied to the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Herbert, who had also given his aid to the Government in obtaining that loan. It was, indeed, rather late for such a motion, after the loan had been obtained; but whether it were so or not, the motion might very well be passed, if it restrained the Government in their extravagance. He was afraid, however, that honorable members had been altogether too severe upon the Engineer-in-Chief, who was by no means altogether responsible for the increased expenditure. That gentleman had been for the railway beginning from the other side of Ipswich, without the extra cost of the bridge over the river. Again, there was another matter which he thought the Secretary for Lands and Works was more responsible for than the engineer: that was for altering the curves and gradients on the Main Range, and the consequent additional cost of the line there. He did think, then, that it was hardly fair to charge upon the engineer this expenditure, when the Minister for Lands and Works had been expostulated with by his engineer concerning it. As to the remarks of the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, in reference to sideway stations, and the proposal to abandon them, he thought it resembled "shutting the stable door after the horse was stolen." They could not save anything by abandoning them.

Mr. GROOM: Yes, take one to Dalby and the other to Toowoomba.

Mr. MILES: Well, no doubt a great saving might have been effected without them at first; but the stations being erected, he did not see how the evil could be cured. It had been said by the honorable member for West Moreton that this was not a financial question; but he thought the question did come under that designation. They were attempting to save the Government from extravagance. With reference to financial difficulties, did the honorable the Colonial Treasurer say that they were not in difficulty? For his own part, if he had dishonored cheques flying about the country, he should think he was in difficulty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The honorable gentleman is simply alluding to the bad taste of the banker, and mere report.

Mr. MILES: If it were only reported, he hoped the cheques would not be dishonored. He had it upon the best authority that there were dishonored cheques from the Government. However, as he said before, he thought it questionable whether this motion would have any particular effect in restraining

expenditure, for the Government did not pay much attention to the wishes of the House. He should support the motion.

Mr. HALY said he would certainly support the motion, if it would do one iota of good, but he did not see that much could be saved to the country by the resolution. If they began to alter and tamper with plans, they would only increase the expense in the end. The Government would be tied down, so that they could not keep the expenses from increasing to the country. He knew very well that to tamper with plans always increased expense, and he, at any rate, had always paid very dearly for doing anything of the kind. Government would find it the same. He would heartily support the motion, if he thought it could do an atom of good. He could wash his hands clear of having anything to do with those railways. He had voted against them; an appeal was then made to the country, and he got kicked out in consequence. He could not then give the Government his vote for railways; he voted against them, and would vote against them again. There was one thing he would say: he could not agree with the remarks of the honorable member for West Moreton about fencing the line and its expense. The expense would be very trifling, and would not save £200 a mile. That would be a very small saving for the security afforded by fencing; for the Government, he believed, would have to pay more for charges in the case of accidents than that. The only reason he could see for the honorable member for South Brisbane bringing forward the motion was to make the Government more cautious; he did not see how it would do more good. He should not support it.

Mr. McLEAN said the House reminded him of a gentleman who *would* indorse a bill without any security. For they wanted to tie down the hands of the Government when they had already got the money to expend. The honorable member for South Brisbane ought to have put the motion before they had passed the Loan Bill. Now it was too late, no check could be exercised over the expenditure, and no good would be done by the motion. Some honorable members indulged freely in criticising the Engineer-in-Chief; he did not admire such criticism as that. The gentleman himself was not there to protect himself against such attacks. He certainly did consider that it was not right, nor within the province of honorable gentlemen, sent here by their constituents, to attack any person in the public service without some clear grounds, shewing that it was a duty incumbent upon them as public men to do so. He repudiated the idea that the House was a court of inquisition to hold inquiry against all persons, or to throw out imputations against anybody. If there were anything against the Engineer-in-Chief, the Minister for Lands and Works was responsible to that House for not bringing the mis-

conduct before them; for that Minister was responsible to the House for the conduct of his subordinate. If there were anything to impugn his veracity and professional ability, he believed that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government and that department, was sufficiently well informed, or ought to be—considering his capacity to understand human nature and figures—sufficiently well informed concerning the conduct of that department. That gentleman had taken this responsibility upon himself; and they must look to him and make him responsible for anything that might occur, because he had himself appointed his under-secretary for railways, and that was one reason why all the responsibility should be fastened upon him, as he had taken the appointment out of the hands of the House altogether; and indeed he was responsible to that House and to the country, for the proper working of his department. So far as the engineer himself was concerned, he (Mr. McLean) could speak very highly of him. They were fortunate in having such a man, both in respect of his professional capacity and the successful carrying on of the works. With regard to the criticism passed upon the wire for fencing, and various other matters which honorable members criticised freely, he could not see how they could blame the Engineer-in-Chief, if the indents must be carefully overhauled by the head of the Roads Department. It was their duty to send for nothing but what was necessary; but if Government had sent for more, for iron buildings, and so on, unless the Government declared that their engineer had deceived them in his estimates; it would become their duty, even then, to put a limit to the price, when the orders were sent home, and more especially as to the price of railway stations and other things not portions of essentials for the railway, or the rolling stock. Anybody could tell what should be the cost of a station, but not that of a bogie engine, or any other engine on the railways, and similar professional matters. They could not blame the head of the Government for mistakes about the latter. But the cost of railway stations could justly be fastened upon him; as they should not have been sent for, unless with a limit put as to cost. The honorable member for South Brisbane stated that they had already voted for 192 miles a sum of £1,700,000, and he submitted that if they could complete that railway, as well finished as it was between Ipswich and Gatton—if 192 miles could be done for that sum—there had been no railway made in the colonies of the British Crown so cheap, and he believed there were none anywhere that would be better. He could not, of course, say anything as to the northern portion, but on that to Dalby the money would be well spent, indeed. As far as the embankments and everything else were

concerned, they were far better than any of the New South Wales railways, and they were capable of conveying all the traffic that would be required in their lifetime, at least. He could not say anything about the rails and the nature of the probable traffic. He believed, with regard to the bumping, spoken of by some honorable members, that it was the length of the carriages, rather than any defect in the rails, and particularly the length between the wheels, which caused that bumping. Certainly, when the line was extended, he should be very glad to have a trip on it, and he believed it would be perfectly safe. He had full confidence in the engineer, and felt that he would do his work well, and see that others did theirs. That gentleman was able to cope with the contractors; and if he would conduct the management of the other lines with the same vigilance that he had shewn already, he (Mr. McLean) thought they would have every reason to be glad that the colony had such an Engineer-in-Chief over the works. He spoke with reservation pending the inquiry going on in another place, and they were in a difficult position just then because of that inquiry. All necessary measures to do full justice would be forthcoming by-and-bye from the evidence of that committee. He should, at any rate, be ready to do justice to the country as well as individuals, without screening anybody deserving of blame, in the matter of carrying on the railway works. As to fences, he would say that without fences for protection, it would be an act of great imprudence to travel on the lines. The land would, when sold, fetch more with the railway fenced off on both sides. People would make their calculations accordingly. Those who had purchased land already, if the line were unfenced, would put the extra cost upon the land. From any point of view, of a pecuniary kind, it would be very unwise to discontinue fencing in the line. There was another point of view in connection with the matter: in a country where such floods happened, there would be no protection for the embankments against the trampling of bullocks, and it would require a larger number of men to keep up the line, which would never be safe, and indeed, he should not like to travel by such a railway at all. He wished he could see the utility of voting for the motion; but he could not see what good it would do, particularly when a close investigation into railway matters was going on in another place. When the extensive evidence taking was considered, and since they would soon have to vote on the report of the committee, they would be able to judge whether any further investigation was necessary. On that ground, he had not voted on a previous occasion for the proposition of the honorable member for Maryborough for a committee on the railways. With another committee already sitting, it would be very futile indeed, to have done so.

Besides, the shorthand writers were already more than fully occupied at the present time, and they could not take further work. To ask them to take evidence before the other work of committees was finished, would only put them in a corner. He could not vote for the motion.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he could not agree that the Engineer-in-Chief was entitled to all the blame put upon him, because he was quite sure he could not have foreseen floods and accidents, which had caused a large amount of additional expenditure. It was impossible that he would be likely to frame his estimates upon the chance of a great flood which scarcely anyone in the colony had ever seen equalled. There was scarcely a single individual who would believe in the height of the flood of 1841, and that of 1863 was not near so high, by some feet. That flood, then, having exceeded so greatly all the floods since, it was not likely that the Engineer-in-Chief could frame his estimates to meet a flood such as a majority of the inhabitants could not believe in. He considered the flood a very fortunate thing, because it had happened before the final construction of the works. He had before remarked on the great difficulty experienced in the estimate for the launch of the "Great Eastern." And in the case of the large vessel—the "Northumberland"—a mistake of a similar kind had been made, which nearly involved the formation of a dock to launch her, at a cost equal to the price of the ship. When such mistakes were made; it was not unlikely there should be erroneous estimates in a large matter, such as railways in a new country.

Mr. GROOM: To the extent of half a million.

Dr. CHALLINOR: That might be seen in the "Northumberland," which was likely to have involved an extra cost exceeding, or, as much as, that of the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba. The honorable member for West Moreton had stated that the Engineer-in-Chief, being a contractor for the works, was not likely to be interested in economy. He, however, did not think that was the case, for that gentleman's professional character was at stake; therefore, it was his true interest to make a substantial railway as near as possible within the estimates. At the same time, he had two things to think of—first, that the work was such as to insure the safety of the lives of the public, and was faithfully performed for the Government; and, secondly, that the three feet six inches gauge should not be chargeable with accidents arising solely from malconstruction or want of faithfulness in the contract. It was the engineer's interest, therefore, to get the work done as faithfully, cheaply, and as well, as it could be done, for the sake of his professional character. He did believe that the Engineer-in-Chief had shewn himself the right man in the right place, and that the contract had been done as economically as

it could be done. But whether there might not be placed some individual to come between him and the Government was a point to debate, still retaining an engineer to carry out the surveys and superintendence of the works by contract, as much the cheapest to the country. He quite concurred in the opinion that moneys borrowed for public works should be properly accounted for; at the same time, he did not think it was the intention of the honorable member for West Moreton that the Government ought to furnish fuller details of the accounts than they did in any other department. He thought that honorable gentleman had once said the details of expenditure belonged to the duty of the Executive, and were what the House ought not to deal with.

Mr. HERBERT: The details ought not to be laid upon the table.

Dr. CHALLINOR continued: Of course it was necessary for them to reduce the estimates if required. He did not think that the present resolution was necessary to make the Government economical in carrying out existing contracts. The difficulty which they had no doubt experienced in carrying the new loan would teach them that. Many honorable members, indeed, had only felt disposed to vote for that loan to save the character of the colony. After the difficulty thus experienced, Ministers would, in all likelihood, be careful for the future in the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds. And they had some pledge from the Ministers that this would be so, because the House only sanctioned last year the expenditure of £100,000 out of votes for other purposes, and they had only entered into contracts for that sum. The Minister for Lands and Works, therefore, would hardly exceed the new loan without very good cause. He did not know that it was necessary to refer at large to the banking business. The conduct of the bankers might be partly owing to the state of the money market at home, and the difficulty which had been experienced in disposing of the debentures already authorised, making the bank unwilling to receive as mortgage more than those they had on hand. Another difficulty arose from there not being a special vote for the Warwick and Toowoomba and Dalby lines of railway, for the work there had encroached on the fund for the Ipswich and Toowoomba line; thus leaving the Government shorter of funds than had been anticipated last session. At that time, it was considered they would have money enough to carry on the works simultaneously to the present session, and further, that better terms would exist for the disposal of fresh debentures this session. Those, he considered, were the true grounds of the late financial difficulty, and not any mismanagement on the part of the Government. For his own part, he would feel no hesitation in travelling upon a forty-pound rail at the speed which the engineers had asserted a

train could be safely run. Knowing the carrying capabilities of a certain thickness and weight of iron, it was clear that if the weight and speed were not more than the carrying capabilities of a forty-pound rail, it must be perfectly safe.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: Competent engineers say to the contrary.

Dr. CHALLINOR: Competent engineers stated many things that were contrary. If twenty or thirty years ago they had been told that they could travel in vehicles of such light construction as the common American buggies, now so much used, no one would have believed it; but they found that they could travel in them with perfect safety.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: The engineer he referred to was engaged in making a railway in this colony at the present time.

Dr. CHALLINOR: There was no comparison between the two men. The one had been engaged in making many railways, and the other was making his first.

Mr. DALRYMPLE: No; he had been engaged on others.

Dr. CHALLINOR: He was not there to speak of the comparative merits of those two engineers: he believed they were both competent men. The testimony of that very engineer to whom the honorable member had referred, and who was now put forward as so superior, did more to convince the Upper House of the soundness of the views entertained by the Engineer of the Southern and Western Railway than that of any other person, and the more so because he had been put forward to oppose his testimony.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS: He opposed this railway scheme altogether.

Dr. CHALLINOR: He opposed the three feet six inches gauge, but he stated that it was a question of speed altogether; and he proved that the three feet six inches gauge was quite as safe at a speed of twenty miles an hour as a four feet gauge at forty miles an hour. They had the testimony of another opponent of the three feet six inches gauge, that it was a line quite capable of carrying all that they required. He could not support the motion.

Mr. WATTS: Sir—I am firmly of opinion that this motion is out of place, and that the honorable member who introduced it ought either to have brought it forward before the Loan Bill was laid upon the table of the House, or he ought to have left it until a report of an inquiry, at present going on in another place, had been received. We should then have been able to deal with it much better than at the present time. It seems to me an illustration of the proverb of "locking the stable door after the horse has been stolen." I am also much surprised that a resolution of this kind should have emanated from the honorable member for South Brisbane, because he was one of those members who, in opposition to my side of the House, voted for the £435,000 to

construct the railway from Toowoomba to Warwick. I should have thought the honorable member for South Brisbane ought to have taken that into consideration before, and if the colony was so badly off, in a financial point of view, and in so bad a condition, he might fairly have said—"as we have not the money now, we will defer that expenditure to a future day." I am very sorry, indeed, to hear remarks made with regard to the Engineer-in-Chief. I am one of those who believe him to be a thoroughly competent man. I believe, from the knowledge I myself possess of railways, that in the whole world you would not find another piece of railway constructed in the same firm and substantial way as the railway now in existence between Ipswich and Gatton. If the line is carried out in the same substantial way to Dalby, it will stand the test of comparison with any other railway in the whole world. It is all very well for other honorable members, who have not travelled much on railways, to pass their opinion on the construction of these lines. Only two days ago, I went up the line with two gentlemen from England, and so great was their astonishment, that they said if it had not been that they had seen a line constructed near Venice on much the same principle as this, they would not have thought it possible to construct such a line. In fact, they were well pleased with the formation of the line, with the railway carriages, the engines, and the whole management of the line, and they will go back home impressed very favorably with the three feet six inches gauge of Queensland. When the plans and specifications were laid upon the table of the House, it was not then known, except by one of the oldest residents of the colony, not very far distant from the precincts of the House at this moment, that it was possible ever to have such a flood as that in 1863. Before that date, the plans and specifications had been laid upon the table of the House, and approved of. But blame would have been attached to the Engineer-in-Chief, if he had not recommended the Government to increase the length of the banks, on the Range, to prevent their flooding over, and carrying away a great portion. I can recollect a flood, some time back, when my draymen, going up the country with stores, were stopped by the water. The draymen had to take refuge in the trees, and the stores were washed away. It would be very unfortunate if such a catastrophe were to occur to a train, filled with one hundred passengers and plenty of luggage. These things ought to have been taken into consideration, and it was wrong for honorable members to come down here and blame any party. It is unfair and un-English like, to condemn a prisoner unheard, and it is unfair to condemn a man when we have no evidence to shew that he was wrong. I think such charges ought not to be brought in, when they might be repented

of, when evidence can be obtained. The expenditure upon the Main Range has been commented upon, but I do not think the Engineer-in-Chief can be blamed for that. I think it requires investigation. If honorable members will think for themselves, if they have been engaged in the onerous duty of building a house, they will have found very few contractors who could estimate the cost of such a house, on every occasion; they would have to pay much larger sums than they thought at the time of commencing, until they almost wished they had not begun. If we had known that the railways would cost so much, we should, probably, not have commenced them. With regard to the railway stations, I fully agree with the honorable member for West Moreton, that they cost far too much. I do not recommend the erection of the trumpery railway stations put up in some parts of New South Wales. I consider it better to put up a good article in the first place, although it might cost a little more than was at first expected, than, by-and-bye, be compelled to do so. Some reference has been made to the Engineer-in-Chief being a contractor. I believe such has been the case in many parts of the world, and, if it is so, the Government are not much more to blame, for having entered into the contract, than the Engineer-in-Chief. There is no doubt, that the few words which have fallen from the honorable member at the head of the Government, if applied after the completion of the contract, would be a wise course to adopt. I think the Government would be wise in having an engineer who would go and report upon the works under the Government; an engineer who might be entrusted to carry out any further contracts they might have to enter upon. Something has been said in reference to the motion felt in the carriages. I do not profess to be an engineer, but I am possessed of common sense, and I would advise honorable members, before expressing their opinions, if they do not understand already, to go first and try to ascertain from competent engineers or from their own experience if what they meant to utter was correct. I have frequently travelled on the engine, the tender, and the carriage, before the line was opened, and if honorable members were only to take a trip on the engine, they would find very little motion was experienced. I think the reason of this is that the engine and tender has only six wheels and the carriages have eight, placed at the two ends of an enormously long carriage. The same motion is naturally felt at sea, and a heavy head sea running over the poop and stern of a ship communicates a very disagreeable motion to the vessel. I consider this motion to be not at all dangerous; it is the oscillating motion that is more to be feared. On the line of railway recently constructed from Parramatta to Sydney, a very different motion will be felt. I think it will be wise

for the Government not to allow these trains to run at a speed exceeding fifteen miles an hour, the rate of speed for which they were constructed. If that rate of speed were much exceeded, the result would be damage to the rolling stock. I think it will be wise to restrict the drivers to that speed, even if they are a little behind their time, for it would be better to be a little late than to run the risk of endangering the lives of the passengers. Reference has been made by the honorable member for the Kennedy, that the engineer for the northern line intends to put a stop to the motion complained of, by putting in more sleepers. I only hope he will be able to stop the motion, though it appears to me that putting four sleepers instead of one will only make the line cost a little more. I think it will be very dangerous not to fence the lines in. It has been mentioned by Mr. Sandeman that it would be cheaper to put up wooden fences instead of wire ones, but I am of opinion that in the long run wire fences will prove the cheapest. From practical experience, I can state that an ironbark post will not last more than fifteen years, while a wire fence may be said to last thirty years. I hardly know what to do with this resolution; I should like to restrict the Government and keep them within bounds with respect to their expenditure. I would much rather the honorable member would withdraw it for a while, for I am not quite prepared to say which way I shall vote.

Mr. PALMER said that, agreeing, as he did, with what had fallen from honorable members on that side of the House, that a motion of that sort would have come with better grace from a gentleman who had opposed the Railway Loan Bill than from one who had supported it, still he did not think that they should complain of this, because it shewed that the honorable member was suffering under some remorse of conscience, and they ought to welcome the repentant sinner. He thought that the Government, in respect of railway matters, ought to be pretty closely looked after by the House, especially with respect to the extension of the railway from Allora to Warwick. With regard to fencing the railways in the remote interior, it was not more necessary in this colony than in America, where they had abundance of cattle. It was well known that the railways there were not fenced in; but to obviate any difficulty from cattle straying on the line, it was customary there to have a cow-catcher attached to the front of the engines. It reminded him of the answer given by Mr. Stephenson, when under examination before the committee of the House of Commons: on being asked by one of the members—“Suppose a cow came on the line, would not that be very bad?” Mr. Stephenson replied—“Yes, for the cow.” They had no right to blame the engineer, because he could not run the trains at a high speed on a line which was specially constructed for a slow speed. He had

had some conversation with Mr. Plews on the subject of this line, and had asked his opinion about the propriety of having the sleepers placed closer together. His answer was, that he considered the line perfectly safe for all purposes of traffic; but he thought that by increasing the number of sleepers and putting them closer together, they would increase the comfort of the passengers; but he was not sure of that. If that were done, he believed that it would not increase the amount of the contract by more than about £2,000. He saw no objection to this motion standing as it was, being convinced that the engineer of the northern line was not mistaken in his estimate.

Mr. STEPHENS, in reply, said: Whatever may be the fate of the resolution now before the House, it is quite clear that the debate we have heard this afternoon must be productive of great good, and that it will be sufficient to put some check on the expenditure going on. Several members who have spoken, seem to be in great doubt as to the course they shall adopt in dealing with this resolution, and seem to be afraid to vote on the same side with me, since I gave that unfortunate vote for the Warwick line. When the Loan Estimate was laid upon the table of this House, it appeared that £420,000 was the sum asked for to complete the line from Ipswich to Dalby; and I found, on examination, that this sum was in excess of the previous sum which had been voted, and which was said to be quite sufficient for that purpose. In the discussion on the Loan Bill, it transpired that this sum would necessarily be required, in order to complete the contracts then on hand, and those they had been committed to, and therefore the money must be paid. Under these circumstances, I felt that the best plan would be to vote for the amount, although I did so, as I believe the bulk of the House did also, under compulsion, feeling as we did that we were bound to vote for the sum. We did so unwillingly, and I felt that the wisest plan would be to bring forward some resolution that would give the Government my opinion on the subject. If that vote was passed—for it was the Warwick vote on which that long discussion took place—if that vote was passed so very easily, we cannot blame the Government very much if they allow the engineer to incur further expenses, and come down to this House for the money, unless some discussion takes place on this question afterwards; because, if the vote is obtained very easily, it is a strong temptation to come down and ask for more. But this resolution puts the Government in possession of the opinion of the House, as to the advisability of permitting the engineer to make further improvements, by which they might turn and ask the House for another half a million of money. We are quite prepared to vote any sum to complete the contracts now in hand, as readily as before. This expression of opinion will be quite

sufficient to make the Government keep the expenses down, as near as possible, to the sum in hand. The only objection I have heard against the resolution as it now stands is, that any alteration in the plans will be illegal, for it will be equivalent to altering an Act of Parliament, because the plans have been approved by the House. I am not aware, however, that in the plans very expensive iron stations have been approved of, and I think they could be done away with very well, as well as several things of a like nature. It was a most unfortunate argument to advance, that the alteration of the plans would be illegal, because I found, in a portion of the engineer's report that I read this afternoon, that the dispute with one of the contractors was owing to the alteration made in one of the lines, and this was made before the 19th October, when the plans had been approved of some time. The iron stations, &c., will not be any alteration of the plans laid upon the table of the House. A great deal has been said about the engineer, and two or three members who spoke in the latter part of the debate, have been somewhat severe in their remarks in disparagement of the Engineer-in-Chief. I am not aware that honorable members have said anything disparaging of the skill of that gentleman as an engineer. I feel confident that I have not done so, myself. But those members who have been making remarks about Mr. Fitzgibbon would have been better employed in considering some of the quotations made from the Engineer-in-Chief's report. Some absolute contradictions were given—such as quoting the exact figures, and the number of tons that could be taken up the different inclines. I think it would have been better if these quotations had been answered, instead of running down his professional ability. I have not alluded to the position of the Engineer-in-Chief as contractor, but I would express a hope that in the case of that gentleman, at all events, the payments to him should be in accordance with the agreement; and if any supplementary payments are made to him, the opinion of this House should be taken on the subject; first, for with him, as in any other definite contract, the payments should be in accordance with the terms of such contract, and nothing else, without the consent of the House by a vote. I think that when the House adopted the railway system, and the first report of Mr. Fitzgibbon was laid upon the table of the House, the honorable the Minister for Lands and Works had stated that that railway system was part of the railway policy of the Government. This had the effect, to my mind, of placing the Government in the hands of the engineer. Under any circumstances, the Government must be in the hands of their engineer, to a great extent. With regard to railways, I think it will be advisable for the Government to pause before they take the advice of anybody to run into larger expenses

than are authorised by vote; and if they are recommended by their engineer to do so, they should consult this House, and the House would grant them anything that was required, but they have no right to be led into any additional expenses. I proposed to make an alteration in this resolution, after hearing the opinions expressed by the House; and every discussion makes me more strongly of opinion that some further sum will be required, but I think it ought to be as small as possible. I would make a small alteration in the last two lines and a-half of the resolution, and would substitute the following words: "And to obtain a reliable estimate of the probable amount required for that purpose," in place of "at a cost not exceeding the amounts now voted; and that such alterations be made in the plans, or in the amount of work to be performed, as shall ensure this result." It requires great care indeed, in the expenditure of very large sums of money, to take care of the credit of the colony. We should, therefore, have some idea, so far as can be obtained, as to the probable amount that will be required to complete this line, if any is needed, so that we may know how much we shall have to borrow within a short period; for in two years time we shall have to vote the additional sum required. Nothing can be of greater assistance, in a financial point of view, than a clear understanding as to what we have undertaken. The remarks that I made this afternoon—that it would be necessary to obtain reliable data as to the probable cost of this line—have not been contradicted, but nothing reliable is now before the House; and therefore the Government ought to accept this resolution, which really will be of some assistance to us, and to the country, in arranging the financial affairs of the railway. With the alteration I have made, I will now leave the question in the hands of the House.

The resolution, as amended, was then agreed to.

#### DISEASES PREVALENT AMONG CATTLE AND SHEEP.

Mr. HALY rose to move the resolution of which he had given notice—

That this House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a committee of the whole, for the purpose of considering the desirability of presenting an address to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to appoint a board, consisting of two medical men, a veterinary surgeon, and two practical men who thoroughly understand the general management of stock, for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting on the best means of eradicating the diseases now prevalent amongst the cattle and sheep in this colony; and that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates a sum not exceeding £2,500, for the purpose of carrying out this investigation.

He said: I regret that some honorable member more competent than myself to deal with a question of so much importance has

not thought proper to bring this motion before the House, or one similar to it, for I am quite aware that I am not able to do justice to this subject. I do not mean to say that I have not given this subject my best consideration, or that I have not brought such practical experience as I possess to bear on it; but what I mean to say is, that I have not the power of expressing my opinions in such forcible language as to place this motion in its proper light; for I believe that no subject of more importance has ever been brought before this House—not excepting the Land Bill that is now occupying so much public attention; for what will be the use of our Land Bills, or all our waste lands, if we have no stock to occupy them? I am convinced, if some such step as I have shadowed forth in this motion is not carried out to its fullest extent, which science combined with practical experience can do, that we must lose our flocks and herds in tens and hundreds of thousands, as sad experience has proved they have done in New South Wales. With the black leg, catarrh, Cumberland disease, and now, pleuro-pneumonia; and how can we know but rinderpest may be the next? Allow me to ask honorable members, how was it that when I first came to New South Wales none of those diseases were known or heard of north of the Hunter? Because we had no miserable land laws to force us to overstock our runs; and we then could afford to run our stock in flocks of 400, and the consequence was we did not destroy the grasses so quickly as we do now; and practical experience has taught me this much—that all new country is far more healthy for all kinds of stock than after it has been stocked for a number of years, and that sheep, in particular, fatten much better, and in a much shorter period, in new than old country. Formerly, on the Burnett, which is not considered a first-rate fattening country, it was no unusual thing for wethers to boil down from twenty-five pounds to thirty pounds of fat per head, and bullocks from two hundred and ten pounds to three hundred and thirty pounds each. Now, I believe, the average of the Burnett would not exceed half those amounts, though in some particular and very favorable localities the results from the pots may still be satisfactory. But I can give a most extraordinary instance of the fattening qualities of the Burnett when first taken up; I can vouch for its correctness. About sixteen years ago, I took some sheep on terms from Mr. Cardew, amongst which were some 1,500 old ewes (I believe that was the correct number) that I considered were too old to breed from, and if I had kept them over another year, and a hard winter had set in, I should have lost thirty per cent. of them. I then considered the best plan would be to fatten them, and boil them down in June or July, though the lambs had only been weaned from them the previous March. I should like to

ask the honorable member for Ipswich, Dr. Challinor, how many pounds of fat the sheep boiled down per head, and what a similar number would now boil down, off the same run, under the most favorable circumstances? As usual, the honorable and gallant member is silent. Perhaps he does not wish to give his valuable opinion on squatting questions, unless he gets his fee; but as it is necessary to carry out my argument, I must inform the House that those old ewes boiled down sixteen pounds of fat each (they averaged that), and that a similar number, under the most favorable circumstances, off the same run, would not now boil down six pounds of fat each. These are facts that I have proved beyond a doubt. Now, Mr. Speaker, there must be some very good reasons why sheep will not now fatten as well and as quickly on the same run as they formerly did. In my opinion, there must be a constant failing of the most nutritious grasses off all the runs in all the Australian colonies, from year to year, and that, in my opinion, is the cause of all the diseases amongst our sheep and cattle. There will be one grand object gained, if this board can ascertain whether my theory is correct about the failing of the most nutritious grasses over the length and breadth of the Australian colonies. I think this can be easily ascertained by examining the grasses on the oldest runs in the colony, and proceeding on until those runs are examined that have been only occupied for a few years; also by examining the contents of the stomachs of the sheep and cattle, as opportunity offers, as the examiners pass through the different runs—for they will be sure to find the owners of most stations slaughtering sheep or cattle for their own use—and wherever they find diseased sheep or cattle, they must be extra careful in examining the contents of the stomachs of those animals that are affected, or have died from any disease, and so preserve those contents that they can be sent to the neighboring colonies to be analyzed by men of the highest professional attainments that can be obtained. We shall not only then find out the grasses that sheep and cattle are fondest of and fatten the best on, but we shall also find out those plants that are poisonous, and we shall also ascertain if the most nutritious grasses are of such a delicate nature, as I think they are, that in a few years they are so completely destroyed on some runs that sheep cannot exist on them. I shall only mention places where I have had sheep of my own, though I could mention many places in the neighboring colonies where this has occurred. For instance, on the Clarence, Richmond, and Logan Rivers, where sheep did so well once, I do not think there are now 2,000 sheep. On some runs more favorably situated for the growth of these nutritious grasses, or from some other cause, it takes a longer period to destroy them; but as they

do not grow in sufficient quantities to keep the animals in good health, they are liable to catch, or I may go further and say they produce the diseases now prevalent in the colony. I have stated it once before in this House, and I now state it again, that in less than three months from this date I can produce glanders among the horses of this colony—a disease that has never been known to exist in the colony up to this period. I mention this to shew that such diseases can be produced, and that there are certain producing causes of them. I feel confident that the opinions I have so briefly set forth are worthy of the serious consideration of the board, should they be appointed; for my experience, not only in this colony, but also in British North America, has proved to my satisfaction that the improper feeding of stock has more to do with these diseases than anything else—I will not even except breeding in-and-in. I regret to add that the present land laws are so framed as to force squatters to overstock their runs, and to shepherd their sheep in such a manner as to destroy the valuable grasses in the shortest possible time; and if the squatters ask for an extension of their leases so as to enable them to fence in, to preserve these delicate yet most valuable grasses, without which no sheep can exist, a mob cry is got up in nearly every town of the colony against the grasping propensity of the squatters. This cry is got up to answer political ends, by persons who no more understand the breeding of stock or the land question than this paper which I hold in my hand. The next great thing for this board to inquire into is, whether there is any efficacy in inoculation for the disease called pleuro-pneumonia; for I have met a great many persons who are greatly in favor of it; and I may here mention the name of Mr. Mc'CORD, of Coonambula, who says he can prove that inoculation is a preventative, if performed in a proper manner. From all I have read about rinderpest, I believe that pleuro-pneumonia is only a milder form of that disease; for how can we otherwise account for cattle that have died from rinderpest invariably shewing, when examined, some signs of having had pleuro-pneumonia? This almost convinces me that the disease is a mild form of rinderpest. I remember asking a doctor up at Nanango how he could account for this; and he said he could only come to the conclusion that pleuro-pneumonia was a milder form of rinderpest. In pleuro-pneumonia the disease does not break out through the skin as it does in rinderpest, and consequently it flies to the lungs, which are the most easily inflamed parts of the animal. Therefore, I should like to see vaccination tried for this disease, or, at any rate, make the matter a subject of inquiry. There is a great difficulty, I admit, in getting any cowpox from animals nowadays. The virus has not, I believe, been got from an animal for the last twenty years. As for getting it from

the cow, therefore, I think we cannot do so; but virus taken from a healthy child would be just as good. At any rate, it was due to the pastoral interest that some effort should be made to check the spread of these diseases. Look at the immense amount of pastoral property in the colony, and the immense debt on that property. Why should we not try by some means to find out something that will protect that property from loss? How can we say that there is nothing in these theories, when we read the writings of a man like Professor Dick, who says there is something in it? I could say a great deal more on this important question; but, as it is getting late, I shall merely proceed to read a few extracts from articles published in the *Veterinarian* and in the *London Times*. The following extracts are from a letter addressed to the Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer, by Mr. Isaac Seaman, M.R.C.V.S., of Saffron Walden. Mr. Seaman says:—

“During the last two seasons a very large number of lambs have been reared, thousands of sheep fattened, and upwards of twenty different flocks debilitated by disease restored to health, in this and other neighborhoods, by using semi-malted grain; and during the last two tropical like summers, when the grass crops have almost entirely failed, this food has been found of the greatest value, resembling more in its effects the natural food of sheep than any other that I am acquainted with. It is an excellent substitute for turnips and green rape of winter, and the different clovers and grasses of summer. During the last lambing season, the advantage of using germinated wheat and barley has been most marked; on many farms where large flocks of breeding ewes were kept, scarcely a turnip had grown, and whilst twenty per cent. of lambs were lost from flocks fed upon dry, and hence indigestible food, not more than one per cent. was lost from those fed upon semi-malted wheat and barley.”

That shews what injury was done in the short space of one summer. I only want to shew that my arguments are based on the theory of improper feeding more than anything else. Mr. Seaman then goes on to say:—

“I have some horses which I should have no difficulty to fatten with sprouted grain, but at rest, and fed upon raw food in sufficient quantity, are sure to become diseased.”

Honorable members will mark that Mr. Seaman here says they are *sure* to become diseased. He goes on to say, still speaking of the best methods of feeding:—

“The different cakes have been in great demand, and, with increased demand, increased price and increased adulteration, and, from the adulteration, increased mortality of stock. The concurrence of these circumstances has produced the rising price of meat during the last five years, until it has reached a point that has not been attained since 1813. \* \* \* This is without taking into account the loss of cattle arising from the use of impure cake; one farmer in this parish recently lost eight head of cattle from the use of it, and all others that fed upon it were seriously depreciated

in value, and I could mention numerous other instances of like loss."

Now, I can read through the whole of this book, and I can mention many more instances which go to support my arguments. I think, however, these are sufficient; though I must read a few lines that bear more on what I say about sheep not being able to exist on certain runs, owing to our miserable land laws. This extract is taken from the *Adelaide Observer*, and embodies the true philosophy of cattle feeding:—

"Carbon is another of those elements which enter largely into organic structure. Everything produced under the influence of life contains carbon. It constitutes nearly half the weight of any dried animal or vegetable structure. It forms the skeleton framework of every plant and every tree. It is also an important constituent of the mineral kingdom. In the diamond it is found crystallized. In black lead, in coal, and in other bituminous substances, it is found in various degrees of purity. Combined with oxygen it forms carbonic acid, and with oxygen and calcium it forms limestone, coral, marble, chalk, and a variety of other compound but inorganic substances. Animals require, as food, a large amount of this carbon. Carbon supplies the body with fat, and fat is the fuel which supplies it with heat. The living organism is, in fact, a lamp which is fed with oil from the food, and with air from the lungs, and which burns with a slow but invisible flame and a constant but gentle heat. Oily and carbonaceous foods, such as starch and sugar, are called non-nitrogenous, or heat-forming, foods. But, besides these compounds, there are others of a mineral nature, which are necessary for the formation of bony structure. Bones form no inconsiderable portion of the weight of an animal. The bones of the sheep amount to one-third, and those of the ox to one-fifth of the total weight of the flesh. These bones consist chiefly of phosphorus, lime, and magnesia. The phosphorus and lime form phosphate of lime, while that with magnesia form phosphate of magnesia. The following are the proportions in which phosphate of lime will be found in the bones of different animals:—Sheep, seventy per cent.; horse, sixty-seven per cent.; cow, fifty-five per cent.; calf, fifty-four per cent.; pig, fifty-two per cent. Now, in the living organism there are great chemical and physiological changes perpetually going on. Animals breathe, perspire, digest, and excrete. In the act of respiration carbonic acid is continually rejected from the lungs. Of every 100 pounds of this acid twenty-eight consist of solid carbon. A man who takes ordinary exercise daily, throws from his lungs about eight ounces of carbon. To replace this alone he must daily eat at least eighteen ounces of starch or some other carbonaceous food. Animals give from their lungs quantities of carbon proportioned to their weights. An ox or a horse, ten times the weight of a man, will daily give off four to five pounds of pure carbon. To replace this, from ten to twelve pounds of starch or sugar will be required. But, besides the loss by breathing, there is also the loss by perspiration. Animals perspire that they may live, and perspiration is as necessary to health as respiration. The skin, like the lungs, gives off

carbonic acid and absorbs oxygen. But the skin differs from the lungs in giving off much more of one than it absorbs of the other. Of 100 pounds of carbon given to each of three different animals, the following were the weights proved to have been lost by breathing and perspiration:—horse, sixty-three pounds; milch cow, forty-six pounds; Sheep, forty-four pounds. There is, in fact, a perpetual system of decay and renovation going on in the animal organism. Atoms that were built up yesterday are breaking down to-day, and others are being built up to-day to break down to-morrow. The nitrogenous tissues of the muscles, the nerves, and the brain, alike with the fat tissues, are perpetually wasting away; while the lungs, the skin, and the excretory ducts are the great scavenging instruments by which the waste matters are being banished from the system. It is perfectly clear, from these considerations, that they who would feed cattle to the best advantage must pay great attention to the quality as well as the quantity of the fodder they employ. If these be exactly proportioned to the necessities of the animal, the loss occasioned by the waste of the tissues and the process of respiration will be in exact equilibrium with the gain of the food. The weight of the animal in such a case will remain unchanged. But if the quantity of food be increased, and the supply exceed the waste, the increase of fat and flesh must be the necessary result."

I could give a few more interesting extracts from this article, but as honorable members don't seem to care about the matter, I do not want to press these things on the House. I am only doing what I consider to be my duty, and honorable members can do just as they think proper about the matter. The following is a letter on the cattle plague, addressed to the *Times*, by Mr. Abraham Tollemache. The writer says:—

"The Cattle Plague Commissioners are about to send a veterinary surgeon into this neighborhood to investigate the question whether vaccination is any safeguard against rinderpest. It is not a moment too soon; the cattle are dying daily by hundreds in this county; and during the visitation in 1747 the disease prevailed most generally, and was most fatal towards the latter part of the winter, the months of February and March being very destructive. I hope the gentleman appointed will be competent and outspoken. Every facility for his investigations shall be afforded to him, and nothing whatever shall be withheld from him that he may be desirous of knowing. Having been requested by several stock-holders and others to make known, through the medium of *The Times*, the present condition of my ten vaccinated cows, I am sure, from the importance of the subject, you will allow me space to do so. My ten cows are up to this present time quite healthy and well. I made no difference in their treatment either before or after the operation. No medicine was given, no change of diet. Some of the cows were in milk, some were dry before calving, and one calved six days after she was vaccinated. My own family and household partook, and partake, of their butter, milk, and cream, without experiencing the slightest inconvenience. As the question of vaccination being a safeguard against

rinderpest is of vital importance in this cheese-making county, I may state that, after the most diligent inquiries, I have not been able to hear of one fatal case in this neighborhood where the operation had been successful. Many vaccinated cows have died, but not one, as far as I can hear, where the vaccine had taken. I have lately been trying an experiment, which I am sure will possess deep interest with many of your readers. On Thursday morning last, the 11th, I had an eighteen-months old Alderney heifer, which had been most successfully vaccinated, turned into a kind of loose place, nine feet square, in which was one calf very ill from unmistakable rinderpest, and another calf which had just died from the effects of it. The dead calf was removed in about half-an-hour after my calf was put into the place. The sick calf died the following day. Since then two more calves ill from rinderpest have been placed with my calf, and have since died from the disease. My calf is as healthy and sharp as ever she was, notwithstanding she has been kept for five days and five nights in the most fetid atmosphere, and coming in immediate contact with these four dying and dead calves. Surely, sir, there is a ray of light here; and may we not hope that the same merciful Providence 'in whose hands is the breath of every living thing, and whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills,' may vouchsafe to do for our cattle, and by the same agency, what He has done for mankind?"

Now, I think, sir, that is a letter which shews, to my satisfaction, that the case I have put is a strong case. It was merely by reading an article that was published in the *Lancet* which came out last April that these ideas were formed in my mind; and now, I say, that this board should be appointed, if for nothing else, to ascertain whether vaccination is really a preventive to pleuro-pneumonia. We have evidence that the Cumberland disease exists in this colony—or, at any rate, it did exist, and may come again. It is one of those that come to-day and go to-morrow. It will disappear directly you shift your sheep, and that shews that it is this miserable system of trampling out the grass by over-stocking that does the mischief. It will be seen by the philosophy of cattle feeding, which I have just read, that sheep have a larger per centage of phosphate of lime in their bones than the horse, ox, or pig; and as the bones weigh a great deal more in proportion to their size than any of those animals, it is quite natural to suppose that they require those plants which contain the largest amount of phosphate of lime in them, to keep them in health. Honorable members will also see that sheep require a larger per centage of carbon, in proportion, to sustain life than either of the other animals mentioned. Now, it is quite clear to me, as my experience has proved—and this treatise on cattle feeding has borne out my theory—that sheep cannot exist on some runs which horses and cattle may do exceedingly well on. I again repeat, that this is one of the greatest problems this board will have to decide, and I feel quite certain, if the board arrives at the same

conclusion that I have, the Government must see the necessity of altering our land laws to prevent the wholesale destruction of these most valuable grasses. Feeling now that I have done my duty to my adopted country by bringing this motion before the House, I leave it in honorable members' hands to deal with as they in their wisdom may think proper. I shall answer anything worth answering in the objections of honorable members, and I shall now read the resolution; it is as follows:—

"That this House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a committee of the whole, for the purpose of considering the desirability of presenting an address to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to appoint a Board, consisting of two medical men, a veterinary surgeon, and two practical men who thoroughly understand the management of stock, for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting on the best means for eradicating the diseases now prevalent amongst the cattle and sheep in this colony, and that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates a sum not exceeding £2,500, for the purpose of carrying out this investigation."

One or two honorable members seem to think that I should reduce the sum asked for here. I am not willing to reduce the sum, but I am willing to reduce the number of the board. Perhaps it might be as well if the board were to consist of one medical man, one veterinary surgeon, and one practical man. I am sure that the squatters will give every information that they can afford, and would contribute money cheerfully for such a purpose as this. With these remarks I shall leave the question to the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If any motion were brought before the House for the expenditure of money in a way that would be useful and valuable to the country at large, I should be the last man in the world to oppose it, even though the country can ill afford the money. But I must again differ from my honorable colleague, the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Haly, as regards that portion of his motion, at any rate, because the desired object ought to be arrived at without the expenditure of any money at all. The honorable member has told the House that several commissions of inquiry on this subject have been held in the neighboring colonies. He was correct in stating that. As far back as 1854, a disease appeared in sheep in New South Wales—the catarrh—and a commission of medical men was appointed to inquire into it, and they sent in a report. Several inquiries have since been held into the causes of diseases in cattle, such as pleuro-pneumonia and the Cumberland disease, and commissioners have reported upon those subjects. Those reports are before the public, and are as full as they possibly can be. But they have by no means set at rest the varying opinions which have long existed as to whether the diseases

were imported, or were infectious, or contagious, or not. A great deal more can be done by individual experience than by these commissions. The honorable member has proved that most conclusively, because he has told the House all about it already. The honorable member has told the House that he attributed disease in stock to the disappearance of the natural grasses, and he has also told the House that the land laws of the colonies are the cause of the disappearance of the natural grasses; because the sheep are shepherded in larger flocks than they formerly were. There, he was totally wrong; the land laws have nothing at all to do with the matter. The honorable member said the mischief was caused by the overstocking of runs. Now, the tendency of the land laws has been to throw open a large extent of country, and relieve the already fully stocked runs in those parts. The honorable member is, therefore, wrong in coming to the conclusion that the land laws have injured the natural grasses of the colony. What have the land laws got to do with it at all? The honorable member has alluded to the period when flocks were run of small size. That was in consequence of the cheap labor—prison labor—obtainable at that time, and no doubt the sheep did better then. When the price of labor rose, the squatter found himself compelled to increase the size of his flocks. The change caused the grass to be trampled down, and though the sheep did better for some years, they then fell off, and in some districts ceased to thrive altogether. This arose from running the sheep in flocks of too large a size, and also because the nature of these animals is migratory. They will not thrive long on the same country. Not only did the New South Wales Government hold medical inquiries on the subject of diseases of sheep and cattle, but they appointed botanists to travel and make report as to the question of the disappearance of the natural grasses. Those reports I shall not quote from. Mr. Moore was one of the gentlemen appointed to investigate the matter, and his report can be perused by honorable members. In that report Mr. Moore stated that the grasses in the oldest parts of the colony had disappeared, that the new grasses were inferior, and in some cases not nutritious, but poisonous. What have the land laws got to do with that? It was caused by the squatters themselves herding their cattle and sheep in an improper manner. Mr. Moore made recommendations, and pointed out what the squatters would have to do. He said they would have to sow fresh grasses—natural grasses, or European, or foreign grasses, or whatever they liked—in order to bring back their runs to their former state. But they have never done that. If the reports of the inquiries which have already been held are looked into, they will be found quite sufficient. Here is a large sum—

£2,500—asked for by the honorable member. Suppose we had a commission to-morrow—what sort of a report would they bring up? Just the same sort of thing as that which the honorable member has just read—a jargon about carbon and perspiration, and all sorts of things. I dare say that is all true and correct, but I will ask the honorable member whether he is prepared to carry out these ideas? Where will he find the proper food for the animal? With regard to pleuropneumonia, practical experience is far better than anything else that can be got. A commission sat some time ago, and brought up a report on the subject of pleuropneumonia, and that report is now only so much waste paper. Some people believe in it, and some people do not. Some do not believe in inoculation at all, and others believe that it is a very efficacious prevention. No doubt it would be a proper remedy if it were done in a proper manner; but in nine cases out of ten it is not so done. Well, I say that practical experience is a better guide in these matters than anything to be learned from medical men. The Government, however, can go so far as to say that they will make a compromise with the honorable member, by seeing that the Scab Commissioners are empowered to hold an inquiry, and they can call upon practical men and medical men to give evidence if they like. Practical squatters may be examined as to their experiences of the best mode of cure, the deterioration of runs, &c. I have stated that the primary cause of the diseases is, as set forth by Mr. Moore, the disappearance of the natural grasses. We know that already, and all the commissions in the world cannot tell us any more. As far as such a commission as that is concerned, I have no objection to the inquiry; but I oppose on the part of the Government such an expenditure of money as the honorable member proposes, because the money is not to be put to a practical use, and the colony is not in a position to pay any money unless it is for a practical purpose.

Mr. WATTS: I think, sir, that this House and the country are indebted to the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Haly, for introducing this motion. We have, for the last two mails, heard of the fearful state that the mother country has been brought into by the prevalence of a disease among the stock there, called the "rinderpest." We have seen that some expensive commissions have been investigating the causes of that disease, and seeking for a remedy; and I do not see any reason why we, who have a similar disease amongst ourselves, should not by some means try to eradicate or prevent it. I felt rather surprised at some of the arguments that fell from the Colonial Secretary, though I cannot agree with all that has fallen from the honorable member, Mr. Haly, as to the diseases being produced by the loss of the grasses of the colony. I can prove beyond doubt that

these diseases have been imported into, not only this colony, but into all the colonies. How is it that if this disease of pleuro-pneumonia has been produced by the loss of the natural grasses of the colony, we found it existing first of all in this colony to the north? That is simply because the disease was brought in the animals and taken there; and the grasses had nothing at all to do with it. I may also state that the first animal belonging to me which took the pleuro-pneumonia was an animal that I had imported from England, and which cost me £300. I was unable to save that animal, which communicated the disease to the rest of my pure bred stock, so that I lost to a considerable extent by that beast. That was a clear proof that I actually imported the disease from the old country. I may say it is necessary that we should investigate the nature of these diseases; and, if we possibly can do so, find means of remedying them. At one time I did not believe in the efficacy of inoculation; but I think I shall be able to prove to the House that, if it be properly performed, it is a preventive. I allowed the disease to go on amongst my cattle for twelve months, and out of eighty working bullocks I lost during that time no less than three teams. They were not teams, in the sense that we generally take that term, but the very best of my bullocks. I then thought, "Well, I cannot lose more if I inoculate, than I do if I leave them alone;" and so I got a competent person to come amongst the cattle. I admit that a great deal depends upon choosing the virus, and the proper time for taking it; and that alone would form a subject for inquiry. Since the period at which I began to inoculate my cattle I have not lost a single beast, and I am convinced that it is in our power to put a stop to a great portion of the loss that exists among the herds of the colony. If we do not attempt to do something of the kind, we shall ere long have some difficulty in getting food to supply the towns; so that independent of loss falling upon individuals among whose herds the disease has arisen, and the necessity of being called upon to raise among themselves, year after year, a fund to pay parties who have the disease among their stock, it is fit that the question be investigated, rather than we should continue to go on in the way in which we have been going on. It will be difficult to deal with the stock in some portions of the colony—the scrubby portions; but, because we are unable to collect the stock there, we should not prevent the remedy in the more settled portions of the colony, but leave parties outside to do as they think best. I am not quite sure as to the best mode of conducting this inquiry, neither do I think it should cost such a sum of money as is now asked for. I think we may appoint a select committee of the House; or, if not, take the step that the Colonial Secretary suggested, and get the Board of the Scab Commission to inquire into the matter. They certainly can

collect sufficient evidence, and obtain a great deal of information from veterinary surgeons and medical men. As to the learned portion of the honorable member's speech, I shall not go into that, because I do not feel quite competent to deal with it. But there may be a great deal in what he said, and it may be necessary to supply an animal with a large quantity of carbon to enable it to grow a certain quantity of bone, and so on. I do not think I need say any more on the question. I can see that it is a question of great importance to the colony, and I hope that we shall be able to deal with it in some way to prevent these diseases from spreading over the country.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS said he thought this was a measure that the Government ought not to deal with; it should be left in the hands of the squatters themselves. He objected to the interruption which had been made to the speech of the honorable member for the Burnett, Mr. Haly; though he could not say whether those laughing interruptions had been caused by aversion to the question, or by prejudice. The Colonial Secretary had characterised the speech of the honorable mover of the resolution as "jargon"—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was the language of the report which the honorable member read that I referred to, and that is a different thing altogether.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS: He thought honorable members should be very much obliged to the honorable member for the Burnett for giving them the useful information which he had furnished to the House. The honorable member's speech had shewn an intimate acquaintance with stock in general, and he (Mr. Fitzsimmons) thought that a matter of that sort should not be laughed down. Of course, he was not prepared to say that the honorable member should carry out his power of causing diseases in stock, but he thought the matter should be carefully considered. He must confess he was not prepared to say that the Government should take this subject into their consideration at all. The question, as it appeared to him, was simply this: whether the investigation should be charged to the public, or whether the squatters concerned should support the expense of an inquiry, if they wanted one? He believed that the Government should have nothing whatever to do with it. If diseases broke out among stock, the squatters should deal with them, and the expenses incurred should not be charged on the public. Though it might be of some benefit to people in towns to get good beef and mutton, he thought that the squatters should deal with the matter themselves; for the moment they put it into the hands of the Government, they might put it down as a perfect failure. He thought that the inspectors appointed by Government, by their action, stopped the progress of the colony more than anything else had done. Travelling with stock had

been wholly checked. Certain squatters on the Darling Downs and in the Burnett district were, indeed, enabled by this measure of the Government to dispose of the worthless stock they had on hand; and that had done more injury to cattle than anything else. He was of opinion that the Government should have nothing to do with the matter. They should let the squatters do it themselves. The townsmen could not rightly be called upon to pay out of public money for what should not be done at the public expense.

Mr. GROOM said: No doubt he should be told that he knew nothing of the matter, and scarcely understood it. He would say that, though he had no knowledge of stock and their diseases, as a member of that House and the community, he felt it his duty to look at the question in all its bearings. It, indeed, as intimately concerned the towns as it did the squatters, and he thought the squatter should not be charged when the whole colony was interested. The question should be investigated on scientific grounds. If honorable members had laughed at laughable and amusing extracts, they might have been excused. He should vote in favor of the motion, though not for the whole sum, which was hardly necessary. They had had investigations made in New South Wales into the disease on the Liverpool Plains, and on the Mudgee. The report of Mr. Moore shewed that the disease was due to over-feeding, the destruction of the natural grasses, and the growth of inferior grass and plants in their place. If the board could be of any use to prevent the rinderpest, it should be appointed, and the honorable member for the Burnett was deserving of credit for introducing his motion. It was no secret that cattle were now becoming very scarce, and, in his own town and district, butchers were compelled to increase the price of beef, to buy at the high prices of stockholders. The small sum asked for, then, would be for a practical good on that account. He was not prepared to go into questions about medical men, veterinary surgeons, or squatters. But, if the Executive were called upon to nominate a board, they would, doubtless, appoint efficient members, or else they were out of place as Ministers. It was scarcely in good taste to bring forward any argument to the contrary. It was not to be disguised that a disease of a malignant type had made its appearance among cattle; many had died of it, and before the mischief spread further it was advisable that the Government should appoint a board or commission, to inquire into and investigate the cause scientifically. But he would move, as an amendment, that the figures in the motion be struck out, and 1000 be inserted in their place.

The amendment lapsed, there being no member to second it.

Mr. RAFF said, that he should not be able to support the motion of the honorable mem-

ber for the Burnett, although it involved a subject of considerable importance. The House and the squatters must, however, feel indebted to that honorable member for the pains he had taken in the matter. That honorable gentleman had had great experience, both in feeding and breeding stock, and his researches would have due weight with members practically acquainted with those matters. He could not, however, think that all those diseases arose from the causes stated by the introducer of the motion. He agreed with the honorable member for the Western Downs, that they had imported many of those diseases. But his present object was to call attention to the necessity of seeing that proper precautions were taken to prevent their introduction. He was afraid that the Colonial Treasurer could not spare the sum named in the motion for the purpose contemplated, and probably the inquiry would not be worth very much, as the Colonial Secretary had said. He should be very sorry if the pleuro-pneumonia were but a stage of rinderpest. In reading the accounts of the spread of the ravages of that disease in England lately, he had been struck with the facts stated in evidence, that the disease had been communicated by the clothes of individuals. It occurred to him that it was the duty of the Government of this colony to see that all immigrants on arrival should be landed at some station or island set apart, and their clothes subjected to examination and cleansing. It would be a fearful calamity to have the disease introduced. It would, he thought, be a great preventive of disease among human beings, as well as among cattle. Diseases had been prevalent for many months amongst them in the colony; ship after ship arrived with fever among the passengers, and they had come amongst them with their diseases, which spread in consequence, and were prevailing now. Proper precautions should have been taken against that. He hoped that the remarks of the honorable member for the Burnett would be duly taken into consideration, and that the Government would see it to be their duty to take such measures as they found themselves able to carry out, for the prevention of diseases of that sort being imported. Pleuro-pneumonia, although it had proved a partial evil, might, he thought, be looked upon as a general good. He meant that the disease had been compelling what he considered a law should have compelled in the colony—the substitution of horse teams for bullocks. The disease, indeed, had been mainly introduced by working cattle, and prevailed chiefly amongst them, and they carried it about from colony to colony. If, however, it caused the introduction of horse teams generally, not only would the cost of carriage be greatly reduced, but a great saving would be effected for the public in the maintenance and reconstruction of roads.

Carriage by bullock teams had been very destructive to the roads, and had already cost a foolish outlay on the part of the House. At present, indeed, he did not feel inclined to vote money for these roads, unless they first passed a law to prevent their destruction. It was idle to make roads which would only be destroyed immediately afterwards by bullock-teams.

Mr. WALSH expressed his determination to vote against the motion, because he believed the money would not be properly spent, and they had no knowledge of the causes of the disease, nor means of getting superior information to what had already been obtained by other Governments. But he must say, that the motion had been met in a spirit far different from that in which it should have been, and with arguments which should not have been introduced in a motion of the kind. He was much surprised at the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff's, idea and suggestion, that, in order to prevent carrying about imaginary diseases, more restrictive measures should be carried out in the quarantine regulations, and that their fellow-creatures should be further inconvenienced. He believed that these regulations were already tyrannical enough, cruel, and shameful. He would rather see all the stock in the colony perishing, than increase an injury to his fellow-creatures. He could not understand the notion that anything of the sort should be done against the disease. He had been about to tell the honorable the Colonial Secretary, but he did not perceive him in his place at the time, that the way in which he usually met motions brought forward by his colleague, the honorable member for the Burnett, was not the way in which that honorable gentleman should approach them. It would be as well that honorable gentlemen representing one constituency, should pull together. It had, however, invariably been the case, that the Colonial Secretary had met any resolution of his colleague in anything but a fraternal spirit. He thought that a matter to be deplored, on account of the constituency they represented. If they both divided invariably on opposite sides, he feared that the neglected district of the Burnett would never derive the advantage it might from the united efforts of its representatives. He spoke that in a kindly spirit, and no doubt the honorable gentleman, the Colonial Secretary, acted as he did, in a good spirit of independence. It would really be better, perhaps, for the Colonial Secretary's constituents, and certainly for himself, if he would only throw his heart into a matter, and shew the House that he cared for them. He quite understood that honorable gentleman's position, and had taken that opportune moment to remind him that his fault told more against his own constituency than himself. He must say that he entirely differed from the Colonial Secretary, when

that honorable gentleman attempted to refute the arguments used by his colleague, in introducing the motion before the House, and said that the land laws had nothing to do with the question of diseases. He, himself, had long thought differently, and he had even wished to introduce that subject, because he believed those laws had been the cause of the spontaneous growth of, or, rather, a predisposition to disease amongst the stock of the colony. Those laws furnished an explanation of the careless way in which pastoral operations were carried on—of the disregard shewn in the preservation of runs and the natural grasses—in the uncertainty of tenure which they offered. The tenant under them cared nothing about the future condition of his holding, but took all that he could get in the present, out of it, to the ruin of his stock. The natural grasses disappeared, not because the run itself was overstocked, but because of overcrowding near the station, while miles of country on the run outside remained unstocked; and that led to sad results—the spoiling of the country, and probably disease. It was well known, for instance, that careless sheep farming produced catarrh and scab. He, himself, had had experience of the fact. When any infected sheep were in the country, catarrh and scab broke out everywhere. Now, if the squatter were only proprietor in fee-simple of his run, or otherwise fairly secured in his tenure, he would not carry on sheep farming in the way alluded to. He was sorry that the Colonial Secretary had spoken lightly of the arguments read by the honorable member for the Burnett. It did not signify whether they were jargon or not. He did not believe that the Government could possibly have at their command such information, or such skill, as to justify them in making the experiment proposed. He was pretty sure that all the information the Government could possibly obtain, was already possessed by any single squatter in that House, and would not be more than he could give. Medical testimony could not throw one atom of information into the question. He doubted whether those gentlemen who had been spoken of, as a board of inspectors, could furnish any more knowledge than any other member of the House, upon the subject. With that opinion, and believing that they had already spent a great deal too much money, he trusted the House—anxious as he was to meet the member for the Burnett's view—would not consent to vote the money.

Mr. SANDEMAN said: Before the motion was put to the House, he should like to say a few words. He quite concurred with the honorable member for Western Downs, Mr. Watts, that they were much indebted to the honorable member, Mr. Haly, for having brought this subject under the notice of the House. They could not exaggerate the importance of the question before them. It was a difficult

one to deal with, and great difference of opinion prevailed concerning the diseases in the country. He happened to be one of a select committee on the subject, which sat a few years ago; and that committee found great difficulty in arriving at any satisfactory conclusion upon the question. They failed, for instance, to determine whether inoculation was desirable or efficacious. Professor Gamgee had been one of those who had objected to inoculation; but it was now said that he had lately seen reason to alter his views, and that they would at an early day have his revised opinion before them, which opinion seemed to be that inoculation, if not a specific, was certainly very valuable. Mr. Archer, a gentleman who had had considerable experience, had gone into the question very carefully, and had informed him that on a station, not far from that gentleman's, *without inoculation*, the losses sustained by disease were about one third of the stock on the station, while on his own run (Mr. Archer's) *with inoculation* it had been about one eighth. Mr. Archer approved of inoculation, and he mentioned these facts to shew that there was great difference of opinion on the question. The honorable the Colonial Secretary had said that reports on the disease had never yet led to any practical results; that was only an additional reason why they should not ignore further inquiry upon such an important question; if they could by any means get more information, they should do so. He thought the suggestion of the Colonial Secretary might be a desirable one to adopt—to take medical and other testimony concerning the disease, upon the spot. Such evidence might and should be followed up by corresponding action in the infected districts. He would suggest that the commission recommend the appointment of sub-committees in such districts to investigate diseases and their causes, and that the Government should be prepared to devote a moderate sum of money for these purposes. He did not know, however, that they would thereby arrive at any conclusion they wished to attain, with any certainty. Some good at least might result, and no trouble should be spared when the country was so largely concerned. The amount asked for might not be sufficient for the object in view. But he would leave it to the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, who was chairman of the commission, to consider the suggestion. He now came to another point. The Colonial Secretary had said that the land laws had nothing whatever to do with the subject under consideration. For his part, he must say that the most efficient remedy that could be devised, resolved itself into a conclusion with which the Colonial Secretary, if he were to state his views, must agree—that fencing was the best specific for disease; and unless they were prepared to justify that expense, by a sufficient security of tenure, they would still suffer, in every

point of view. He would, without detaining the House further, express a hope that the Colonial Treasurer would consider the suggestion thrown out to him.

Mr. MILES said he was prepared to give all credit to the introducer of the motion before the House; but he thought that honorable member could almost give all the information obtainable on the subject, and a commission could not give more. The honorable member for the Western Downs had already told them how the disease was introduced, namely by some imported bull; and he had further told them that he had had the disease himself. Again, in inoculation, they had, it appeared, a remedy at once. Now, he was prepared to bear out what the Colonial Secretary had said about the contradictory reports furnished by commissions in the past. There was not a single squatter of one opinion entirely with another on the question. But he thought it was the part of the squatters themselves to take up the matter, for they would do it far better than any commission. They could judge of the report such a commission would present from what had been furnished by the Board of Health concerning the necessity for a railway to supply milk to the babies of Brisbane. To test the question, if necessary, he concurred with the suggestion of the honorable member for Rockhampton, that the squatters themselves should subscribe for the object sought, because he did not think they had any right to the country's money for any such purpose. As to the observations made by the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, he could not see any advantage derived from pleuropneumonia, because it drove bullocks off the roads. He could not see how horses would supply the place of bullock teams in the case of a heavy fall of rain, because they became useless in boggy ground, from their instinctive timidity. Till roads were macadamised, there was no danger of horses superseding bullock teams in this colony. For the reasons stated, he should oppose the motion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was sorry he should be compelled to oppose the motion, if it were to be pressed to a division. But he would ask the honorable member to accept the suggestion of his honorable colleague the Colonial Secretary, and refer the matter to the Scab and Pleuro-pneumonia Commission, with a view to determine in what way they could best undertake its consideration so as to meet the objects in view; and whether they might not, from some funds available, meet the expenditure involved, or should come to the House for a specific vote. The advantage of the experience acquired by other colonies should not be lost sight of by this young colony. The neighboring colonies had found from experience that it was of no use to go to any great expense with the idea of

preventing diseases in cattle. The same conclusion might fairly be arrived at with reference to Queensland. Different reasons had been assigned for the appearance of the disease, and some honorable gentlemen ascribed it to the operation of the land laws; but it did not appear to him that in Europe, where the land had been alienated, and where fencing existed, as in England and Scotland, the inhabitants had escaped disease in their cattle; perhaps it was the land laws there. He must say he did not think that the scab regulations had been justly dealt with by the honorable member for Rockhampton. He (the Colonial Treasurer) believed that those regulations had had a very good effect. However, as honorable members held different views on this matter, he would not refer to it at any length. He would, in conclusion, recommend to the honorable member for the Burnett the propriety of adopting the suggestion of the honorable Colonial Secretary. That honorable member should withdraw his motion, as his object might be met, and managed in such a manner as to come before that House, so as to suit his views and those entertained by others in the House.

Dr. CHALLINOR said he was not surprised that honorable members had indulged in a laugh at what had been spoken and read on the subject by the honorable member for the Burnett. But that gentleman had quoted a most interesting document which he, himself, had previously read with great pleasure, as would any person desiring to become familiar with the subject. He recommended that document to every stockowner, for he ought to know what kind of feed was suitable to produce fat or flesh, which the paper went to shew. When they considered the action of the Home Government in reference to the cattle plague, they might fairly consider it a fair subject of discussion whether, as was the plan in England, that House might not vote funds out of the Treasury for an investigation of the disease. He felt that a national calamity should be met with national resources. But they did not possess the material to compose the board desired by the honorable member. Certainly, if that gentleman's object could be thus secured, it would be cheap at the amount asked for. Scientific men of the kind required were not to be had in the colony, and their aid was quite essential; for the requirements of the colony were not such as to call for other than practical men into service. An efficient board of inquiry should consist of scientific, medical, veterinary, and stockowning persons combined. Two of these elements were wanting to the colony, and no scientific inquiry could therefore be instituted therein at a moderate expense, and from its own resources. The Colonial Secretary had said that one person could treat the disease as well as another, but he (Dr. Challinor) differed from that opinion entirely. It was quite compatible

with facts that a disease should originate from bad feeding, but become communicable afterwards by contagion or the air, without reference to the manner of feeding at all. Such was the case with fever: it might be generated from common causes, but once in the system, it might impart disease in a different way by contact, or otherwise, to others. He could not at all concur with the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, that persons should be put into quarantine to prevent rinderpest, though they might well be supplied with soap, soda, and water, beneficially, both to themselves on arrival, and to the colony at large. Neither did he agree with the honorable member for the Leichhardt, that fencing would prove a sufficient specific against disease in stock, for overstocking could take place within fences, and then it became a mere question of time. Besides, if pastoral tenants overstocked without fencing, they would do the same with the land fenced in, they would continue stocking to the very utmost; and as it would cost more to fence, therefore they would expect to get more out of the country fenced. He should be quite willing to vote for the sum asked for if he thought that it would attain the end desired. The honorable Colonial Secretary and Colonial Treasurer had made a very good suggestion, to refer the matter to the Scab Commission, leaving them, and not the Government, to deal with it, without giving them authority to spend money, and they had not the wish to spend it.

Mr. HALY, in reply, said: I am exceedingly sorry that the Colonial Secretary should have set his face so much against this motion, for he must know that he had to give up sheep because he could not keep them on his own run, although formerly they did remarkably well. He also knows very well that there is nothing for sheep on the Burnett, except fencing, and the squatters must have long leases to afford that. That honorable gentleman knows that if such another season comes as we have had, not only will other persons follow his example, but seventy per cent. will have to give up sheep farming. I do not agree with him, or with these commission reports. I have read them; I have read Mr. Moore and Mester, and the only thing Mester said was that cattle must be destroyed. Not one of them all went to the root of the matter. There has no man yet found out how to cure the disease. I want to get at the cause and effect. For I believe prevention is better than cure. Improper feeding, I believe, is the cause; and when I was shewing that, members were talking and laughing, instead of listening to what I read to prove it. Queensland is an immense grazing colony; the colony exports ninety per cent. from squatters, consisting of the produce of the stock of the country. It is absurd, then, for this House to begrudge the sum I ask for, when the

interests at stake are so large. I am anxious for a commission to inquire into what I believe, and what I was shewn in a *Lancet* received from home last April: namely, that rinderpest was only another form of pleuropneumonia. I can prove it, if I only had time, from a book with the places marked, which said that the disease was mistaken for pleuro-pneumonia, and they recommended inoculation, because it had succeeded so well in Australia, but they afterwards found it differed from pleuro-pneumonia. Then they thought it was some typhoid disease, but latterly they discovered from five or six letters from a medical man, that it was nothing more than small-pox within the animal. Also, that the animals dissected after death from rinderpest shewed signs of pleuro-pneumonia in every case. Now, if this statement be a fact, I say this colony ought not to lose a moment in finding out whether vaccination or what were a preventive of pleuro-pneumonia. Then if such a calamity as rinderpest were to overtake us, we might be better prepared to meet it. At home, in a small country, they lose hundreds by this disease, and there has been proof that pleuropneumonia was imported; then, why not rinderpest? Some honorable members said that pleuro-pneumonia was not produced; I will ask—was not black leg, catarrh, Cumberland disease?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: All imported.

Mr. HALY: I beg the honorable member's pardon; if Cumberland disease was imported, or other diseases, they never imported stock with catarrh, it was produced here. Was not black leg produced? I have always thought and read so; and when I first arrived in New South Wales there was not one of these diseases known in the colony. In the north of the Hunter there was no disease twenty-seven years ago.

The SPEAKER: If honorable members will converse, it must be in a whisper.

Mr. HALY: All the inhabitants were then settlers: there were very few squatters, but it was their boast at the time that there was no disease in the colony north of the Hunter. I state only what I know for a fact. We know that pleuropneumonia was not produced in this colony; it travelled up. Of course, once produced, it may be communicated. It is just the same with glanders; I could produce them in three months. Now, what I want is, to find out the cause of these diseases; as prevention is better than cure, any day. If the Colonial Secretary is willing to have an inquiry by a board, and the commission recommend its appointment, I am very willing to accede to his proposals. If honorable members, who were laughing when I was reading the proportions of phosphate and of carbon to sustain life in different animals, had given their attention to the subject, they might have understood me. Cattle and horses do well on the Richmond and Logan,

where sheep do not succeed. I am, however, sure that they are good countries still for sheep on those rivers; but from some cause not known, which I want to find out, I suppose loss of the nutritious plants and grasses, without which sheep will not exist, they will not thrive there. There are certain grasses, I know, and these are trampled out, and in a few years the sheep will not thrive. I want to find out these grasses, and the causes of their failure, and to see what remedy to adopt. I have heard some honorable member say that there are hardly 2,000 sheep in the whole eastern and Burnett district. I am positive that there are 2,000 sheep there now and more. As a reason why I ask an inquiry, I may mention my own case: in the Burnett I cannot fatten my sheep, they only produce sixteen pounds of fat each. These are facts that the House cannot deny, and they should be looked into. If the Ministry of the day and the people wish to destroy the squatting interest in the colony, let them do so, and try farming, and see what they can make of it. I have in all my life tried to assist all interests. I voted for cotton, sugar, and all these things; I agreed to reduce the rent of agricultural leases from two shillings to sixpence, because I am always willing to encourage other interests besides my own, and I do sincerely hope that other interests will arise, so that the squatting interest may subside, and that they will push the colony forward better than squatting has done. No man is more prepared to say that than myself. At present, I wish to see the only interest there is in this colony protected, and not to laugh at it like my honorable colleague for the Burnett, Mr. Mackenzie. I am not to be laughed down upon this question. It is of too great importance to the colony. If we do not care, we shall lose our flocks and herds by tens and hundreds of thousands. If we can save our sheep and cattle by fencing, and fatten them, I think I am only doing justice by pressing this motion, so as to have such a fixity of tenure, as will allow us to fence, and not destroy the only interest we have in the colony. I want a commission to examine the contents of the stomachs of the diseased animals, and the quality of the different grasses: they are not yet known, and I defy any honorable member to tell me these grasses. I have made this my study ever since I was a lad in South America. I then noticed that when the cattle, in winter, fed on poor food, we lost them; but whenever spring returned, all the diseases left them and they soon thrived again and got fat. Now, when reading Sir Francis Head's History of America, I remember, he said that there were at first only one or two horses in South America, and they grew up to numbers, but after they got to a certain number, from destruction of the natural grasses, they were swept off by disease

in thousands, till they were reduced to a limited number. When such a man of eminence wrote thus, it is folly for the House to laugh at this motion. I shall be happy, having done my duty, to take the suggestion of the honorable the Colonial Secretary, feeling that he has as great an interest in the welfare of this colony as I have, and that he will carry out what he will for the best interest of the colony.

The motion was then, by leave of the House, withdrawn.