

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 1866

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 2 October, 1866.

Proposed Abolition of District Courts.—Expenditure on
Public Works.

PROPOSED ABOLITION OF DISTRICT
COURTS.

Mr. GROOM moved—

That this House will, to-morrow, resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to consider the propriety of introducing a Bill to abolish District Courts and appoint a third Judge.

He said he was aware it might be urged that it was beyond the province of a private member to interfere with the course of the administration of justice, but he could only remark that the present was a time when it behoved every member to bring about that retrenchment in the public service which the country so earnestly demanded. Since he placed the motion on the paper he had seen the comments of the

Press, and been in communication with private individuals, and, beyond a solitary letter in one of the Brisbane papers of that day, had not met with a single advocate for the continuance of the Districts Courts. On the contrary, he had been informed privately by one of the gentlemen who signed a petition presented a short time ago by the honorable member for Maranoa in favor of those courts, that many of those who had signed the petition would now willingly sign another praying for the abolition of them. He believed that the Government were not altogether ignorant of the cause of that revulsion of feeling. With regard to the Metropolitan Court, he found from the Press there was a general desire that it should be done away with altogether. When the proposal was made to establish the Districts Courts, it was urged, with a degree of reason, that the expensive process of the higher court had utterly precluded people in the interior from obtaining justice. But on the same occasion the House, yielding to a pressure that was brought to bear on it, allowed a most useful Act to be repealed, and the District Courts, so far from rendering justice cheap, made the process dearer than it was before. In accordance with the desire of his constituents, and, he believed, with the wishes of the people generally, he had recently introduced a Bill to extend the jurisdiction of local courts under the Small Debts Recovery Act. If honorable members would consent to increase the jurisdiction of those courts to £30, he was at a loss to know what work the District Courts would have to do. It was true that the Bill would not relieve the Districts Courts of criminal cases, but the number of criminal cases the courts had to try was not great enough to warrant the continuance of the expense those courts entailed. At Toowoomba the criminal business was usually disposed of in about twenty minutes; at Warwick about the same; and so it was, he believed, in the other towns where District Courts sat. As far as civil business was concerned in his own electorate, there had only been one case in which the amount in dispute exceeded £50. An argument in favor of the abolition of the courts was the large expense they entailed; and in considering it, honorable members ought not to forget the present peculiar position of the colony, for notwithstanding the glowing terms in which some honorable members spoke of its prospects, he must confess that he could see nothing but greater ruin to come; for the financial difficulty was not only great, but it was greater than in the other colonies. In New South Wales, a few days ago, the Colonial Treasurer, in making his financial statement, had warned the Parliament of that colony to take example from the extravagance of Queensland, and had quoted figures to prove that Queensland was more heavily taxed than any of the Australian colonies.

In view of that fact, he thought honorable members should take notice of the motion he had brought forward, and endeavor to prevent further taxation; because it appeared to him that, in consequence of the measures the House were likely to adopt, the Government would come down with some proposition for additional taxes. In abolishing the District Courts, the House should consider the best course to be adopted. With regard to the appointment of a third Judge, there seemed to be some difference of opinion. It had been held by some honorable members that such an appointment was necessary in order to constitute a court of appeal, and he believed it would be cheaper to appoint a third Judge, at a salary of say £1,500, so that the expenses of his court would not exceed £2,000, than to continue the present expensive system. He thought it was also in the province of the Judges to appoint the sittings of the Circuit Courts at more frequent intervals. At present, sittings were held three times a year at Rockhampton, twice at Toowoomba, and four times at Ipswich; and he thought, if the District Courts were done away with, a Circuit Court might be held four times at Toowoomba, Rockhampton, and other places where there were now only two sittings during the year. If that course were adopted, it would effect a considerable saving, and would, he believed, give more general satisfaction to persons residing in the interior of the colony than the expensive machinery of the District Courts. The object in view in establishing the District Courts was to obtain cheap law; but so far from that being the case, a very different result was arrived at, and they afforded an opportunity to members of the legal profession to indulge their predilection for heavy fees as much as they liked, as might be seen by the enormous legal costs, which sometimes amounted to more than the sum in dispute. In the Small Debts Courts the process was much cheaper. With the certainty that the expectations of the Colonial Treasurer as to the incoming revenue would never be realised, and in order to obviate the necessity of increased taxation next session, he thought it was desirable that honorable members should take into consideration whether they could not effect a saving of £10,000 or £12,000 in the way he had pointed out; especially when the House was in such an economical spirit, and trying to cut down the high salaries of some of the civil servants. He would point out that the District Court only held one sitting in the twelve months at Clermont, one every six months at Gladstone, and every four months at Rockhampton. It appeared to him a farce that a court should be held only once in twelve months in such a place as Clermont. As he had before stated, he had introduced the motion with some little diffidence, in accordance with what he conceived the unanimous wish of his constituents. From his own observation, he was convinced that

the objects which the promoters of the District Courts had in view had not been carried out, and that in some instances they had proved a mere masquerade of justice; while in some of the courts scenes had been enacted which would have disgraced a judge and jury club. The Government were not in ignorance of those facts, and he contended that it was their duty to take them into consideration, and to adopt some measures of reform. He should now leave the matter in the hands of the House, in the hope that it would be dealt with upon its merits.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Mr. Speaker—If I could believe that a motion of this kind would be of any service to the country, either as a measure of economy, or in any way to promote its interests, I should offer no opposition to it, and should leave it in the hands of the House. But it is because I feel and know that this motion, if carried, would not be productive of good, that I consider it my duty to oppose it. The honorable member has stated that in some one or other of the District Courts in this colony there has been a masquerade of justice, and that scenes had been enacted in that court which would disgrace a judge and jury club. Now, I am not aware that there is the slightest foundation for that statement, because I believe—and no information to the contrary has reached me—that upon all occasions justice has been administered in the District Courts with propriety and decorum, and with great advantage to the country. As a proof of their due and safe administration of justice, I may say that during the whole term of their existence there has not been one single appeal to the Judges. As far as the Judges and officers of these courts are concerned, justice has been faithfully and decorously administered. I know the circumstance to which the honorable member refers; it occurred in private, and did not in any way affect the administration of justice—it was entirely and purely a personal matter, which has passed away without leaving any scandal to affect the officers of the District Courts. With regard to the opinion of the public out of doors of the District Courts, I can only say that no complaints have been made against them. I have recently returned from the north, and I am able to state that the inhabitants of the northern districts are highly satisfied with the District Courts, and hope we shall, as far as possible, extend their jurisdiction. It was only the other day that a number of petitions were sent in from members of the mercantile community, praying that these courts might have insolvency jurisdiction added to them. Therefore, I think that, as far as the north is concerned, there is every desire to continue the District Courts, and I have no reason to believe that there is any difference of opinion in the western districts. The argument of the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba would have been

very well, if he had only desired to extend the jurisdiction of the magistrates under the Petty Debts Recovery Bill. There, I think he is right, and I think it was a mistake not to have made that extension from the first. But these courts having been established, with great anxiety and trouble, only a few months ago, I think we should not be asked to abolish them upon such slight grounds. It is a dangerous economy to interfere with the administration of justice. I am certain that, if we abolish the District Courts, we shall have to establish them again in a very short time; and I am in a position to shew what would occur if the House were to interfere in this way with the administration of justice. But there are other considerations. Would there be any real saving in abolishing them? There are many expenses connected with the District Courts, which would have to be paid in any case, even if they were abolished to-morrow. For instance, there are the travelling expenses of the witnesses, of the Crown Prosecutor, and the prisoners, which could not be objected to, unless we refused to bring prisoners to justice. I think some serious evil will occur, if these courts be abolished, because, if the present Judges are to travel over the whole of the ground now provided for by District Courts, the administration of justice in Queensland will be weakened; for the two, or even three, Judges would not have sufficient time to attend to their duties. For instance, a judge would have to go to Clermont, a distance of six hundred miles, three or four times to Rockhampton, and, I suppose, also to Bowen and Cleveland Bay. They would have no time for their appeals, or for banco sittings. It must also be remembered, that the gentlemen connected with the District Courts are not to blame. The House, in its wisdom, insisted upon the establishment of these courts, and the House and the country expected their services. One gentleman, I know, was called away from a very good practice; and, I will ask the House, are we, without giving any compensation whatever, to tell those gentlemen that we have no further occasion for their services? That is a question which we must consider, because it was understood that they were to hold their appointments during good behavior—to be, in fact, in the same position as the Judges of the Supreme Court. No doubt, there is a clause which states that if they cease to hold office they are not to receive compensation; but will any one in his senses say that persons accepting that position could expect this House to be so capricious as to change its opinion from day to day, and suddenly to leave them without any appointment? I think the House will see that if these courts be done away with, they will be compelled, from a sense of justice, to give these gentlemen compensation; and where, then, would be the saving? We should save nothing, and be deprived of that measure of justice which

is now distributed throughout the interior. I must, for these reasons, oppose the motion of the honorable member, I do not think his scheme is worthy the consideration of this House; and I believe the House will agree with me that, until either we are too poor to continue them, or there is no occasion for them, we ought not to abolish the District Courts. It is intended that the northern circuit Judge shall hold a court at Rockhampton four times in the year; and, I think, if we go on quietly and keep within our present limits, the country will derive great advantage from these courts, and that it would be dangerous on the plea of questionable economy, to unsettle the administration of justice in the colony.

Mr. WALSH said he was glad to see that the Government did not intend to fall in with the suggestion of the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba. Interference with the administration of justice might not prove real economy. If he had been rightly informed, the expenses of the District Courts were not so great as they were imagined to be, and he thought it was a pity that the Government had not come down with figures to shew what they actually cost. He had been credibly instructed, that the total annual cost did not exceed £8,000, including salaries, travelling, and all other expenses. If that were the case, honorable members would perceive that they had embarked in a much less costly undertaking than they fancied, for carrying law and justice into all parts of the colony, where such things were never thought of before. He believed that the establishment of District Courts had been a saving of some £10,000 to the colony, in the difference in the charges upon suits carried on in them compared with the charges in the Supreme Court, and that they had cheapened the course of justice. In the district in which he resided, they were looked upon as a great boon, and had undoubtedly been a means of preventing crime to a considerable extent. He hoped honorable members would pause before they did away with one of the greatest improvements which had ever been introduced into Queensland.

Mr. PALMER said he looked upon the resolution before the House as another attempt to legislate for the Darling Downs, and to throw over all the other outside districts. He thought it was invidious, and it appeared to be supported by two honorable members only, who had the Circuit Courts opposite their doors. He believed the District Courts had proved a great boon to the colony, and that a great injury would be effected if they were done away with. He thought, also, that the House would act very unjustly, after establishing a system of justice one year, to abolish it the next, before it had even received a fair trial. But while he said that, he thought the officers connected with the District Courts might do a great deal more than

they did. He had noticed the working of those courts in the northern districts, and had observed that the Judge, the Crown Prosecutor, and most of the officers, were completely idle. That, he thought, should be amended. It might not be the fault of the officers in question, but it was a serious thing that they should idle away their time when there was plenty of work for them to do. He considered it perfectly absurd to hold a court at Clermont once a year, when it could very well be held twice a year; and he could not see why courts should not be held more frequently at the other towns in the north. There were no such great impediments to travelling to prevent it. Nor could he see why those officers, who were well paid, should not travel like other people. He thought £1,000 a year was quite enough for the Judges without travelling expenses. He should have preferred to extend the jurisdiction of magistrates under the Petty Debts Recovery Bill to £50, and leave the District Courts, as there was plenty of work for them to do; but he should decidedly object to do away with those courts altogether, after such a short trial, as he believed they were of great service to the country.

Mr. MILES said the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, as usual, appeared to know more of the ideas and opinions of the inhabitants in the outside districts than those persons did themselves. It was very singular that he (Mr. Miles), residing in an outside district, should have heard no complaints against the District Courts. In fact, during the session, he had presented a petition praying that they should not be abolished. The honorable member had laid very strong stress upon some proceedings in connection with one of the District Courts, and had led the House to believe that they had taken place in court, which was not the case. The incident referred to occurred at an hotel in town. It was also rather surprising that the honorable member should bring forward this motion, because he had a Circuit Court almost at his door. If he were placed in the far west, how would he like to have to travel five or six hundred miles to obtain his rights? No doubt the District Courts were a considerable expense to the country, but he did not consider that the House would be justified in depriving the inhabitants of the interior of the advantages they derived from them. With reference to the appointment of a third Judge, it would be utterly impossible for a Judge to hold a Circuit Court in the western district, and to attend to his other duties, in consequence of the great extent of country to be travelled over. He thought the House ought to pause before they consented to abolish the District Courts, and he should therefore oppose the motion.

Mr. COXEN said the resolution was based upon economy; but he questioned whether there would be any economy in doing

away with the District Courts, because he believed the expense would only arise in another direction. He concurred with the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba, in the propriety of extending the jurisdiction of the magistrates in civil cases; but he thought the result of abolishing District Courts would be that crime would greatly increase—especially the crime of horse-stealing. In the outside districts, where the crime prevailed, it had been for some years a matter of calculation whether it was not better to lose thirty or forty horses, or two or three hundred head of cattle, than incur the expense of legal proceedings; and, in view of the difficulty of prosecuting the offenders, the loss was generally put up with. The District Courts, unquestionably, checked all such criminal practices; and he would suggest to the honorable member, that if that system of justice were done away with, one additional Judge would not be sufficient. It was simply a question of economy. With one more Judge the law might in some measure be carried out in the far districts; but not in the same efficient manner as it was now being carried out. A saving of some £1,000 or £2,000 might be effected; but it was very questionable whether there would be any real saving to the country, because he was satisfied that crime would rapidly increase.

Mr. R. CRIBB said he quite agreed with the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba. He believed the District Courts had been considerably more expensive than the House had been led to believe; and he did not think they had effected as much good as they were said to have done. The great evil in abolishing them was the enormous expense attending proceedings in the Supreme Court. He was utterly at a loss to know why those expenses should be so great. He hoped that, whether the District Courts were abolished or not, the Government would do something to lessen those expenses. The honorable the Attorney-General had observed that it would be no economy to do away with the District Courts. That, he thought, was a mistake; for, if the jurisdiction of the magistrates under the Petty Debts Recovery Act were increased, a great many cases would be taken out of the District Courts. Then, it was proposed to appoint a third Judge; and he certainly thought the Circuit Courts, in the northern as well as the southern and western districts, should be held three times a year, at any rate. The railway to Dalby would soon be opened, and travelling would become easy; and even at Roma a Circuit Court might, he thought, be held once in six months. As he had already stated, he entirely concurred in the opinions expressed by the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba; but, taking into consideration the late period of the session, and the small amount of information on the subject before

the House, he thought it would be better for the honorable member to withdraw his motion, and bring it forward again in the early part of the next session, so that honorable members might have an opportunity, during the recess, of satisfying themselves more fully as to the propriety of the alteration.

Mr. WIENHOLT said as the honorable member did not appear inclined to withdraw the motion, he should oppose it. The abolition of the District Courts might suit the honorable member for Drayton and Toowoomba and his constituents very well; but he (Mr. Wienholt) had received letters from the interior praying that those courts should be maintained.

Mr. GROOM, in reply, said he was surprised to hear the honorable and learned Attorney-General talking about the enormous labor the Judges would have to perform if they extended their circuits to Roma and other places. In New South Wales, it would be found that the Judges travelled much longer distances. The Judges in this colony had high salaries, and not half work enough to do. He had given a pledge to his constituents to bring the resolution forward, and he should divide the House upon it.

The question was then put, and the House divided.

Ayes, 9.	Noes, 15.
Mr. Groom	Mr. Fitzsimmons
" Pugh	" Royds
" Brookes	" Macalister
" McLean	" Lilley
" Stephens	" Palmer
" Bell	" Walsh
" Mackenzie	" Coxen
" B. Cribb	" Miles
" Taylor.	" Haly
	" Fleming
	" Sandeman
	" Wienholt
	" Raff
	" R. Cribb
	" Watts.

EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. WALSH moved—

1. That the present condition of the financial and mercantile affairs of the colony require from the Government and Parliament a reconsideration of those Acts and votes which authorised and provided for the carrying out of extensive unfinished public works.

2. That to relieve the country from some of the authorised expenditure, which it is now proved it can ill afford to incur, so much as is practicable of the railway line under construction between Toowoomba and Warwick, and can be agreed upon with the contractor, ought to be discontinued.

3. That the construction of a line of railway from Brisbane to Ipswich might be entertained as a basis for negotiating with the said contractor.

4. That it is desirable to stop the further expenditure of money in the improvement of the navigation of the river between Ipswich and Brisbane.

5. That the foregoing resolutions be transmitted to the Upper House, in the usual form.

The honorable member said the object of the motion was to assist in extricating the colony

from some of the enormous expenditure to which it was committed, and to stop, if possible, what a large proportion of their fellow-colonists had never ceased to denounce as the most wanton and extravagant piece of railway ever made—the line between Toowoomba and Warwick. It was the bounden duty of the representatives of the people to put a stop to, as far as possible, all public works, if they could do so without committing any great blunders. Whatever might be their ideas of the reproductiveness and advantages of certain public works, they had a stronger law to obey—they must be honest and economical, and not spend any more money than they could afford. When the House set about voting those enormous sums of money for public works, the Ministry and Legislature had some little justification, for they had a mistaken notion that this was a rich money-producing colony. But a great change had since come over the country, and persons who were at one time the most sanguine as to the future of the colony were now the most despondent. The Government had found that they could not go on so fast. Instead of their debentures selling above par, or even at par, they had to be disposed of at a loss of fifteen per cent. The public works which had been authorised would cost about twenty per cent. more than was anticipated. It was expected that the railway between Toowoomba and Warwick would cost about one-fourth of a million, but now they had figures to prove that it would cost half a million of money. Supposing it would cost no more than £500,000 in cash to the contractors, yet it would cost the colony £600,000, because of the depreciation of their debentures. If these resolutions were carried, and the Government compelled to reconsider the instructions authorising the construction of railways, Parliament Houses, and improvements in river navigation, then, he believed, the colony would not be long in the present sad condition. They would not find themselves with an increasing debt and scarcely able to raise the interest upon it. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had said that a deficit of £150,000 would exist at the end of the year, and to meet that he had recourse to very severe taxation; but he (Mr. Walsh) did not believe that, with all his taxation, he would be able to pay the current expenses of the country, including the interest on loans. The interest on money expended, principally on railways, would amount in 1867 to £220,000; but even when the railways were completed, what amount of interest would they have to pay on the money expended? If these gigantic operations were carried on for two or three years, the colony would be committed to a debt of about four millions, the interest on which would exceed all the money pressed from the people in the shape of taxation. If such were to be the consequence, he would ask honorable members to pause before they

allowed another penny to be expended on those works. It was said that the works were to be reproductive, but he did not believe the railways would be of any more benefit to the colony than the Parliament Houses. Notwithstanding the assertions of the Ministry to the contrary, he was afraid their eyes had been opened to the fact that the reproductiveness of the railways had been over-rated. The Government ought to stop the works at any cost, provided they saved the colony some outlay. In their present impoverished state they ought to spend nothing on public works; the colony could not afford to pay such gigantic sums. If they could stop the works going on between Toowoomba and Warwick, and so reduce the expenditure by some £300,000, it was their duty to do so. £31,053 10s. 11d. had been paid to the contractors for that line, but what was such a sum, or even £100,000, in comparison with the total cost of the line—half a million of money. Again, in reference to the line between Toowoomba and Ipswich, which, he had been informed, would cost £1,000,000, what was there to justify such a large outlay for the construction of some seventy miles of road, which would never be used for the next fifty years, except for the carriage of wool and the taking up of supplies? It might possibly become reproductive if some very large gold field were discovered on the Downs; they might then get two or three per cent. interest on the money expended. But still it would be worthy the consideration of the Government whether they should not cut it off at the foot of the range. He had received, that morning, a letter from an old colonist, who took a great interest in the success of that line; and he stated that the daily average number of passengers by rail to Helidon was six. If such a line as that would not pay, how, in the name of common sense, could they expect the line between Toowoomba and Warwick to pay—a line which could not even support a respectable coach? He believed the contractor of the line was quite as well aware as themselves that the railway would not pay, and if a proposition were made to him to accept a moderate sum as compensation for abandoning the work, or to use his plant for the construction of a line between Brisbane and Ipswich, he would accept the offer. He (Mr. Walsh) would like to see the line between Toowoomba and Dalby, stopped if possible, as well as the line from Rockhampton to Westwood, for the Government had no business to spend in one direction more than another. He would also include the enormous expenditure upon harbors and rivers, and also the Parliament Houses. Indeed, he thought, if the present depression continued, it would be their positive duty to put the latter up for sale. He thought it would be better for the Government to pay even £50,000 compensation to the contractor of the Warwick railway,

rather than allow him to continue it, for that sum would soon be recovered from the annual loss the line would be if completed. If the contractor refused the compensation, but agreed to transmit his plant to Ipswich, at his own expense, and to construct a line between Brisbane and Ipswich at a similar rate, then the Government ought to accept the offer. Such a line would pay if any one would; and it would also enable the costly improvements in the navigation of the River Brisbane to be dispensed with. Mr. Brady, the Engineer of Harbors and Rivers, had distinctly stated that these improvements would have to be continued as long as the river was used. If that were the case, the railway would, at any rate, save an annual expenditure of some eight or ten thousand pounds. He had been assured by several people, in the habit of taking vessels up and down the river, that the supposed improvements to the navigation were rather impediments than otherwise. The Government were doubly forbidden to continue the public works, for they had appropriated certain trust moneys to purposes for which they were not intended, and no public works ought to be carried out until those debts of honor were discharged. It was clear that the country had been committed to costly works, for which there was no justification whatever, and that the voice of the country was against the continuance of the Toowoomba and Warwick railway especially. He, therefore, called upon every honest member to assist him in putting a stop to it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said that, as far as he could gather, the great object of the honorable member for Maryborough appeared to be to stop the line between Toowoomba and Warwick; and in order to do so, to endeavor to blind the eyes of the honorable gentlemen who represented the city of Brisbane. He trusted the honorable member would not succeed in obtaining the votes of those gentlemen, if they thought for one moment that the Government concurred in the proposal to form a line from Brisbane to Ipswich. He was unable to see how the expenditure could be reduced by stopping the Warwick line and commencing another. He could have understood the honorable member if he had contented himself with proposing a reduction in the expenditure on public works, but was unable to discern his object when he proposed to create another work as costly as the one he wished to stop. He would endeavor to explain to the House the position the Government would be placed in if the resolutions were carried, and the position they occupied under existing contracts. He found, from the specifications before him of the Brisbane and Ipswich railway, that, in round numbers, it would cost £300,000. Now, it must be clear to honorable members, that if they got rid of the Warwick line—and he denied it was in the power of the House to do so—they would

really increase the debt by £300,000, by making the other line. The honorable gentleman, the other day, asked for returns of expenditure on the Warwick line, and he (Mr. Watts) told him that up to that date £31,053 10s. 11d. had been paid to the contractor. But the honorable member had never asked for other expenses that had been incurred. He found that £4,340 had been paid to Mr. Fitzgibbon for surveying the line, and £5,428 10s. for superintending the works. Indents had been sent to London for £39,657 15s. worth of permanent way, and £26,724 worth of rolling stock. He might also say that, in addition to that, in the event of the Government declining to carry on the works, ten per cent. on the balance, £167,000, or £16,700 would have to be paid to the contractor. Further, the Government would have to convey the contractor's plant back to New South Wales, and that would cause an additional expense of £5,000. These two sums would amount to £21,700, and from the payment of them the Government would not derive one iota of benefit. The next question for honorable members to consider was, whether it would be wise to stop the works, and lose the whole of the money that had been laid out upon them. That could not be done by a mere resolution; an Act would have to be passed to nullify the Act now in force. The honorable member for Maryborough had asked the question how the interest of the money the line would cost was to be paid. His answer was—by completing the works, now that they had gone so far; and in all probability they would receive the interest of the money. The honorable member had gone so far as to say that it would be advisable to suspend the railway works from Helidon to Toowoomba, and from Toowoomba to Dalby. He (Mr. Watts) must tell honorable members that if they did stop them, they would lose the benefit of the money that had been expended on them to the present time. The total sum required to finish the Dalby line was from £50,000 to £70,000. If the line were to pay any portion of the interest on the money that had already been laid out, it must be completed from end to end. And the same might be said of the Ipswich and Toowoomba line. Before this railway had been commenced, the rates of carriage were most exorbitant; but the moment it was completed as far as Helidon, the carriers combined, and by agreeing to charge as much for conveying goods from Toowoomba to Helidon as from Toowoomba to Ipswich, they were enabled to compete successfully with the railway. It would be impossible to reduce the rates on the line to compete with the road traffic; and unless it were constructed as far as Toowoomba, there was no chance of one iota of the interest on the million of money being repaid. The honorable member had alluded to the Sunday trains paying nothing. It must be known that the depression which

was felt in the city was also felt in the country; and not only the railway, but every other mode of conveyance, felt the effects of it. Cobb's coaches, which ran between Helidon and Toowoomba, were generally filled to overflowing a short time ago; but at the present time, on each trip, they had not more than one or two passengers. The depression which prevailed just now had a good deal to do with the absence of traffic on the line. With regard to the Sunday trains, he intended to stop them, unless better results were derived from them, as they were a cost to the revenue and did no good. The honorable member for Maryborough had informed the House that the contractor for the Warwick railway had agreed to remove his plant, and to stop the works on that line. He (the Secretary for Public Works) might say that no such offer had been made to the Government, and he could inform the House that the contractor had stated, in his evidence before the Railway Committee, that he had no intention whatever of giving up the Warwick railway. What he proposed was, to leave that line in its present condition and commence the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, and then go back again and complete the other. The Government would thus be placed in a worse position than before. In fact, the contractor had no idea of giving up his contract until he had received the remuneration to which he was entitled by law. The honorable member for Maryborough had also alluded to the advantages which would accrue from having a railway passing alongside of the river navigation, and had spoken of the large expenditure upon that river. But, while he agreed with a great deal the honorable gentleman had said, he maintained that experience had shewn, in all parts of the world, that it never paid to run a railway alongside a navigable river—in no case had such a railway paid. Such a line from Brisbane to Ipswich might obtain the carriage of light goods and the passenger traffic, but the great bulk of the goods would go by water. He believed, however, that a great mistake had been made in cutting away banks in the river, and creating others, and that it would be far better to leave the shipowners to adapt their vessels to the navigation. Three years ago, he had expressed his opinion that it was not advisable to cut away the barrier at the Seventeen-mile Rocks, and he believed the captains of the different vessels who plied on the river would admit that, instead of an improvement, it had been a serious impediment, because before, the rocks held the water back, but now there was less water at Ipswich than before. He did not think it would be necessary to say any more, except that the Government intended to oppose the resolutions before the House.

Mr. RAFF said he was sorry to hear, from the Secretary for Public Works, that the Gov-

ernment intended to oppose the resolutions. He spoke in all sincerity when he said, that had he been a member of the Government, he should have felt himself obliged to the honorable member for Maryborough for bringing them forward. He looked upon them, as perhaps the most important resolutions which had been brought before the House during the present session, and as remarkable for the moderate language in which they were couched. The honorable member for Maryborough occasionally made use of strong language, and instead of stating that the affairs of the colony required a "reconsideration" of the Acts and votes which authorised the carrying out of such extensive works, he should not have been at all surprised if the honorable member had substituted the word "condemnation," for the colony had certainly found by experience that those Acts and votes ought to have been condemned by the Parliament, and by the Government. He considered the resolutions very modestly worded; and he should have thought the Government would have been glad to have had an expression of opinion from the House on the subject. When the railway question was first discussed in the House, he was one of the minority who opposed and protested against the undertaking, in the absence of any reliable estimate as to the cost or the amount of revenue to be derived from those railways, or any calculation as to how the interest on the loan was to be paid by the colony. The honorable member, in introducing the motion, had stated, very justly, that the question was simply a question of prudence and economy—could the country afford the outlay? And it appeared to him that no honorable member could venture to say that a great mistake had not been committed. No one would deny that the colony had been disgraced and plunged into difficulties. But her career of prosperity had been checked, not only by the imprudent borrowing of money, but by the imprudent expenditure of money in anticipation of money to be borrowed. There was no question that disgrace, disaster, and difficulty had been brought upon the colony; and the result was, that the people had been subjected to a taxation unprecedented in any Australian colony. He considered it incumbent upon the House to pass the first resolution, and not only to re-consider its votes, but to take the steps necessary to correct the faults which had been committed; and he contended that the disgrace which would ensue would be still greater if, seeing the results which must inevitably follow, the House did not set to work earnestly to remedy as far as possible the original errors. The honorable member had stated, that the Government had come to the bottom of their purse. That, he hoped, would he admitted. At one time the ideas of honorable members were very extravagant; they seemed to think that there was no limit whatever to the

resources of the colony. But that had been disproved; and it was found that the credit of a country, like that of an individual, could be ruined by extravagance and imprudence. They had found, to their cost, that the credit of the colony was destroyed. The cost of the public works had been increased by the depreciation in the securities; and if it had been a question when those works were projected, whether there was a prospect of remunerative returns; surely now, when the cost had increased by some twenty per cent. by the depreciation of the securities of the colony, there could be no doubt as to the propriety of effecting a saving in the expenditure by stopping those works. The honorable member for Maryborough had referred to the large deficit admitted by the Treasurer, and had pointed out that the interest on loans would amount in 1867 to £220,000; and with that fact before the House it would be worse than madness to sanction the continuance of such a state of things. He hoped that the resolutions would be put *seriatim*, and he thought it would have been better, as the resolutions were of so much importance, if the honorable member had made a distinct motion for each resolution, so that they might have been discussed separately. The honorable member talked of creating money. He had made a mistake there. There was no attempt now to create money, nor ever would be again, he hoped. They now only talked of raising money. The only proper way of creating money was to encourage production, and so obtain commodities, which would be equal to money. As to creating money by inconvertible paper, he hoped it would never again be proposed in that House. He hoped the first resolution would not be opposed, for no honorable member would attempt to argue that the condition of the financial and mercantile affairs of the colony did not require a reconsideration of the acts and votes of the House. The second resolution was to the effect

"That to relieve the country from some of the authorised expenditure, which it is now proved it can ill afford to incur, so much as is practicable of the railway line under construction between Toowoomba and Warwick, and can be agreed upon with the contractor, ought to be discontinued."

He considered that that resolution was also very moderately put. The Secretary for Public Works had not attempted to prove that the Warwick railway would be a reproductive work; and it was a question for the House to decide, when the amount of compensation required by the contractors was ascertained, whether it should be continued or not. He believed it might safely be argued, from what had been stated by the honorable member for Maryborough, that it would be many years before those branch lines—and the Warwick railway was but a branch line—would pay working expenses. The honorable Minister for Public Works

had before argued that the only way to make lines of railway pay was to complete them. That, he believed, was a sound argument when applied to trunk lines. But here an attempt had been made to construct expensive branch lines before the trunk lines were completed—before any experience had been gained as to the re-productiveness of those trunk lines. The third resolution stated, that the construction of a line of railway from Brisbane to Ipswich might be entertained as a basis for negotiating with the said contractor. That he looked upon as a subsidiary resolution, and he did not attach the same importance to it as he did to the others. The Secretary for Public Works had made statements quite at variance with the statements or calculations made by the honorable member for Maryborough. He had stated that the contract for the Warwick line could not be got rid of, and that even if it could, in order to construct a railway between Brisbane and Ipswich £300,000 would be added to the expenditure. If that statement were correct, he (Mr. Raff) certainly should not support the resolution. He had always been of opinion that it could not be long before the trunk line from Ipswich to Brisbane would be constructed, and that it would be the best paying line of any in the colony. At the same time, in the present position of the colony, he would not counsel a vote for the initiation of such a work, unless it were found that the Warwick contract could not be got rid of without a very large sacrifice, and without allowing the contractor to carry out a certain amount of work in another quarter. He considered that that portion of the trunk line should be completed first which would be the most productive. He did not say it would be sufficiently so to justify the Government in borrowing money for it, but he did say that it ought to be carried out in preference to contracting for a line which they knew would not pay—if they were compelled to spend that amount of money, let them spend it where it would be most profitable. The honorable the Secretary for Public Works had told them that £4,300 odd had been paid to the Engineer-in-Chief for the survey of this line. He (Mr. Raff) thought it would astonish honorable members to hear that such a sum was due to the Engineer for ten miles of railway. The honorable Secretary for Public Works also stated that the sum of £39,657 had been pledged or expended in indents. He took it, that these indents were for rolling stock and permanent way required for the branch line, and would be equally useful for a trunk line. The honorable member had concluded his argument by putting the question whether it would be wise to stop the works and waste this material. He (Mr. Raff) said, as he had said before, that would be a question to be decided when it was brought before the House, and it was shewn what would be the loss and incon-

venience in making the alteration. It was incumbent upon the Government and the House at once to put the colony in the best possible position with regard to its finances, because, as was stated by the honorable member for Maryborough, unless that were done capitalists would be prevented from coming to the colony. They were not to consult what would be the best interests of the honorable member for Warwick, but what were the best interests of the colony; and he thought the honorable the Colonial Treasurer should also remember only that he was Treasurer for the colony. The honorable the Secretary for Public Works had asked how the interest on the loan was to be paid unless the works were completed; but it had been stated by the honorable member for Maryborough, that this work never would pay, and he (Mr. Raff) believed that it was truly stated. He now came to the fourth resolution of the honorable member, and he did take it, that whatever might be the feeling of honorable members with regard to the other resolutions, there could be no difference of opinion about the fourth. That resolution was to the effect—

"That it is desirable to stop further expenditure in works for improving the navigation of the river between Brisbane and Ipswich."

There had been a great deal of money spent in, he would not say in improving, but in attempting to improve the navigation of the river between Brisbane and Ipswich, while the only way to lessen the cost of transit on the river between the two towns was to have vessels built in accordance with the depth of the channel. The river was not capable of improvement by any means which this colony could afford, and he hoped no more money would be spent in attempting to improve the navigation between Brisbane and Ipswich. In speaking of the dredging which had been carried on between those two places, he did not attempt to deny the value of the works between Brisbane and the Bay. On the contrary, he maintained that, when those works were completed, at whatever cost, an important service would be rendered to the consumers of three parts of the imports, but he also maintained that the cost ought not any longer to be charged to the general revenue, but be covered by port dues; and he thought the Government would find it necessary to frame a harbor and river trust, turn over the plant to this trust, and to cover the cost of carrying out the work the trust must charge harbor and river dues. They would not then have this clamor about the public money being unfairly spent in improving the different ports. He believed the money spent in removing obstructions to the navigation of the river between Brisbane and the Bay had been well spent. At the same time, he did not think the revenue should continue to be charged with the cost of such work, and he would vote for a Bill for creating a harbor and river trust. If

the people of Ipswich wished to improve the navigation of the river above Brisbane, let them have a trust also. If they only had to consider the navigation of the river between Brisbane and the Bay, the argument that vessels ought to be built adapted to that navigation, would not hold good in that case, as it did with reference to Ipswich. They wanted the river deep enough to admit seagoing vessels to come into the port of Brisbane. There was no honorable member in that House who could come forward and say that the navigation of the river between Brisbane and Ipswich had been improved, and he thought it was the duty of the House to stop further expense in that direction. As a citizen of Brisbane, he should have been glad to see the navigation of the upper part of the river improved; but as a member of that House, he must protest against throwing money away in attempting to do what had been found impossible to do. He hoped that, when the resolutions were put to the vote, there would, at any rate, be no opposition to the first. For, as there was no hope of any reduction in taxation for another year or two, it was incumbent upon the House to make a large reduction in the expenditure.

Mr. TAYLOR said he understood that the resolutions now under consideration were based upon information derived from the proceedings of a committee of the Legislative Council, at least one of them, so far as related to the construction of a line of railway from Ipswich to Brisbane. It had been said outside the House, and by honorable members in the House, that the contractor for the Warwick line was willing to transfer his plant from the Warwick line and construct the line from Ipswich to Brisbane, without compensation for relinquishing the Warwick line. It had also been said that the contractor would not demand that he should be allowed to go back and finish the Warwick line after completing the Ipswich and Brisbane line. Now, he had made inquiries of the contractor himself on the subject, and he ascertained from that gentleman that he had not had an opportunity of making any offer of the kind, and that he had not made such an offer. He gathered from him, on the contrary, that he would not be willing to transfer his plant to construct the Ipswich and Brisbane line, unless he would be allowed to go back and finish the Warwick line. Now, he (Mr. Taylor) could not agree to that course for one moment, for he thought they had quite enough of railways on hand at present. He should have been quite willing to agree to a resolution proposing that the Toowoomba and Warwick, the Toowoomba and Dalby, and the Rockhampton and Westwood railway works should be stopped, and that there should be no further expenditure upon them at present. He had read the resolutions before the House, and he must say that he could see nothing in them. He was quite

prepared to vote for a resolution for stopping the works on the three lines he had mentioned; but he was not prepared to vote for four resolutions, three of which had not a particle of anything in them. Let them take the first resolution; and he would ask, what on earth did it mean? He doubted if a single member of the House understood the meaning of it. He truly acknowledged that he did not know what it meant. He next came to the second of the resolutions. It was all very good; but what would it cost to discontinue the Toowoomba and Warwick line? A considerable amount of money had been paid for that line already; plant had been ordered for it, and unless the Ipswich and Brisbane line were to be carried out, and the plant and rolling stock ordered for the Warwick line transferred to it, what could be done with it? He believed that two-thirds of the expense of constructing the Warwick line had already been incurred. If the honorable member would substitute for three of the resolutions before the House a motion proposing to stop the three lines he had mentioned, he would vote for it. He could vote for the fourth resolution, but the third he could hardly make out. He admitted that the construction of a line from Ipswich to Brisbane might be made a basis for negotiating with the contractor; but the resolution did not bind the Government to anything. If the resolutions were passed, matters would just go on till next session the same way as they had gone, and the lines might be finished by that time. Suppose the resolutions were passed, what effect would they have? He could not see they could have any effect, for they did not bind the Government in any way. The fourth resolution he supposed meant that it was desirable to stop the navigation of the river above Brisbane, by vessels of any size. Now, he believed a great deal of money had already been wasted in the deepening of the Brisbane and the Bremer rivers; and he quite agreed with the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, who had just however found it out that they ought to build vessels suitable for the river, instead of deepening the river to suit the vessels. The honorable member for North Brisbane had advocated all this extravagant kind of expenditure upon the river hitherto.

MR. RAFF: Not above Brisbane.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, that was extremely selfish of the honorable member. So long, it seemed, as the honorable member could get the water over the bar deepened, so that large vessels might come up the river, and discharge and take in cargo at his wharf, that was all he cared for. The shipping business got on very well before the bar was deepened; and as to the steamers being enabled by it to get up an hour or two sooner, what about that? As to the resolutions before the House, he had been informed, on good authority, that the schedule of

prices for the Warwick line would not suit for the Ipswich and Brisbane line. The Ipswich and Brisbane line, he believed, should be constructed for twenty or twenty-five per cent. less than the Warwick line. However, honorable members had had several hours debate upon this matter, and he presumed they would all be as wise when it was finished as when it began. At first, when he heard about those resolutions, he understood that the contractor was willing to remove his plant from the Warwick line, and to go on with the Ipswich and Brisbane line, and that he was not to go back and finish the Warwick line afterwards. Well, he would be agreeable to vote for that; but not with the same schedule of prices. However, he knew that the contractor would not agree to the proposition as to the Ipswich and Brisbane line, unless he would be allowed afterwards to return and finish the Warwick line. There would, therefore, be no good in voting for the resolutions; and so he would vote against them.

MR. R. CRIBB said he did not take the same view as the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, took of this matter. He believed that this was a motion, like many more motions emanating from the same source, the only purpose of which was to occupy the time of the House, and prevent useful business being gone on with. There were a number of questions of real importance to the colony, that had been waiting for time, and here was a whole evening wasted; for he supposed it would amount to that. There would be nothing more done this evening, and he did not think that the honorable member for Maryborough expected that any good would come of the motion, for it was only one of those he usually brought forward for the purpose of occupying time, and making a display. The honorable member had on this occasion introduced to their attention the *Maryborough Chronicle*, and had informed honorable members that if they would read a certain article in that paper, they would be very much enlightened by it. Well, rumor had it, that the honorable member was an important contributor to that paper, and it was very likely the article he had alluded to emanated from his own pen; and the honorable member very naturally thought that other honorable members would be very much enlightened by it, as he, no doubt, thought they would be by his speech. The honorable member began by informing the House that the colony was suffering from a withdrawal of confidence; but he forgot to state that it was only suffering in common with all the rest of the world at the present time. If the whole of the other Australian colonies, the mother country, and other countries, were in a flourishing condition, and this colony were alone in a financial difficulty, what the honorable member had said on that score would have had

some relation to the matter; but, as matters stood all over the world, he could not see that the argument of the honorable member had the slightest application whatever. The colony was suffering, no doubt, from a too lavish expenditure of money, and from a sudden disarrangement of the financial condition of the world; but he had no doubt that, after awhile, the difficulty would pass away, and the colony would again be in a good condition. It behoved them, however, to be as economical in their expenditure as possible at present. The honorable member had informed the House that the great thing that would restore confidence to the colony was the stoppage of the Warwick railway works. Now, that was just of a piece with all the rest of his argument. Why, if the saving of £100,000 would suffice to restore confidence to the colony, it would be possible to get that on a mortgage in a few days. The honorable member had also informed the House, that the Sunday traffic on the line did not pay, and that the trains went up and down with only one passenger as a rule. Well, he was glad to hear that the Sunday traffic did not pay; and he would call on the Government not to run trains on Sunday. He believed it was bad policy to do so. It was bad policy, financially; and he believed that every employée should have his Sunday to himself. He did not put forward the matter in the House as a religious question, but only on the ground that it was bad policy. The coach proprietors knew that that was the case; for they did not run their coaches on Sunday. The proprietors found that it was wise, in an economical point of view, to have no Sunday traffic. He hoped the Government would also take that view of the matter, and do away with Sunday traffic. The honorable member, too, drew a very doleful picture about some trust money that had been spent; but he had no doubt the honorable member, while drawing his doleful picture, was laughing in his sleeve all the time; for he knew well that, so far as the trust money was concerned, there was no doubt it would be all right. The honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, had referred to the Warwick line as a branch line; but he could not agree with the honorable member in that opinion, for he, on the contrary, considered it to be a main trunk line; and he was satisfied it would ultimately be the main trunk line to New South Wales, that it would be one of the best paying lines in the colony, and would make the line between Toowoomba and Ipswich pay better. There was another matter that seemed always to be forgotten in talking about railways, and that was: that if the railways paid their working expenses only, the interest on the cost of construction was not lost, because, against it, they had to place the saving of expenditure upon roads, occasioned by the railways. That was a very important item; but all

those who spoke about railway expenditure seemed to leave that saving out of consideration. As to the resolutions before the House, he to a very great extent concurred in the opinion expressed respecting them by the honorable member for the Western Downs. Supposing the first resolution were passed, what would be the effect? Nothing. It would just have to remain a dead letter. As to the second resolution, he would vote for it if the honorable member would consent to amend it by striking out the words "Toowoomba and Warwick," and inserting in their place the words "Rockhampton and Westwood." He could not consent to the resolutions being put *seriatim*. It seemed to him that there were only two resolutions before the House, broken up into several parts; and therefore the whole should be put to the House as one resolution. He could see through the cunningness of the honorable member in breaking up the resolution. The object of that was to catch the votes of those honorable members who might object to one part, to vote for all the other parts, and in that way, if possible, carry them all; or, at any rate, if he could not obtain a majority, secure a respectable minority. There were, virtually, only two resolutions on the paper; and he did not think it was treating the House fairly, to manufacture five out of them. As the member for East Moreton, and resident in Brisbane, he should be in favor of a railway to Ipswich; and if it were possible at present to carry it out, it might be very well to do so. But, under the circumstances in which the colony was now placed, he could not vote for such a work being carried out at present. A railway between Ipswich and Brisbane was a work that he would like to see carried out by a private company, and he had a motion on the paper directed to the purpose of affording facilities to the carrying out of the work by a private company. That motion might have been carried, if the whole of the time of the House were not occupied with such motions as those now under discussion. Unless the second resolution was amended, as he had suggested, he would vote against it; but he thought the whole of the resolutions should be put together, and not *seriatim*.

Mr. BROOKES said that, when he first read the resolutions, which he did rather hastily, and before he had had the privilege of hearing the long speech of the honorable mover on the matter, he was inclined to think there might be something in them which the vagueness of the language did not convey. Well, he listened to the honorable member for three-quarters of an hour, and unless the honorable member meant to indulge in an unmeaning tirade against the Government, he could not see what was the drift of the resolutions. It was quite certain the first resolution had no practical meaning in it; and he quite agreed with what had been said to that effect by the honorable

member for East Moreton and the honorable member for the Western Downs. He held, with those honorable members, that it was quite impossible to produce any effect upon the Ministry by resolutions like these. The first, for example—what did it mean? It did not mean anything. It did not aim at anything. It seemed to him to be a general way of striking out in the dark to hit nothing; and if the House were to pass it, the Ministry might reasonably enough turn round and say—"Well, we do not know what you mean—you wish to condemn us, so we think, about some acts and votes." And he thought they might very well ask, in addition: Which acts and votes? Such being his view of the matter, he would consequently vote against the first resolution. But there was a little matter in which he thought the third and the last resolutions were quite correct. It was, of course, very tempting to any of the honorable members for North Brisbane to have any prospect presented to them of having a railway to Ipswich; but he must say that he did not believe in the *bonâ fides* of the offer in the resolutions; and he, for his part, would sooner be without a railway between Brisbane and Ipswich till they could have one on its merits; and, in particular, he would have nothing to do with a railway between Ipswich and Brisbane, if it was to be made with the money that was voted for the line between Toowoomba and Warwick. The construction of a railway between Toowoomba and Warwick was, he thought, of more importance to Brisbane than a railway between Brisbane and Ipswich at the present time; for, under any circumstances, there must be a line between Brisbane and Ipswich at no very distant date. The talk about the expenditure on the Bremer and the Brisbane was all nonsense. If the honorable member for Maryborough were to talk for five hours, instead of three-quarters of an hour, on the subject of the river expenditure, he would not be able to state one-half of what there was to be said on the subject. He agreed with the honorable member as to the foolishness of running a railway alongside of a navigable river, but the Brisbane and the Bremer were not navigable rivers. The Bremer was only a stupid sort of contrivance that a punt could scarcely go up; and to talk about the "Telegraph" going to Ipswich, was all nonsense—at any rate, if she did, it would be on a railway truck. Well, though he wanted to see a railway between Ipswich and Brisbane, he wanted to see it obtained in the right way. Now, he looked at the question before the House in this way, that the line from Toowoomba to Warwick was the very backbone of the Leasing Bill. There was no mistake about it. The Leasing Bill, without the line between Toowoomba and Warwick, was of no use at all; and, on the other hand, it was no use making a line to Warwick unless the Leasing Bill were

passed, in order that all the lands alongside the line might be taken up and cultivated. Now, as he had already said, he would wait for a line to Ipswich till he could have it on its merits.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS said he had not intended to speak to the resolutions, but he felt it might be thought he was indifferent to the subject, if he remained silent. He thought a great deal of credit was due to the honorable member for Maryborough, for the manner in which he had brought the resolutions forward. The honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, thought the Government was worthy of condemnation for the policy they had pursued in respect to railways. Well, the honorable member never ceased to condemn the Government on the ground of policy; and the Government still continued to pursue a course of policy that was injurious to the colony. It appeared the Government estimated its railway expenditure at something like £300,000, but if the expenditure that had taken place on some portions of the railway was to be taken as a criterion, the total expenditure would be double the amount estimated. The total cost would not be less than £600,000. Now, the matter for the House to consider was, whether it would be possible to save that sum. Whether, in fact, the financial position of the colony at present was such as to demand that some attempt should be made to save that sum. The honorable member for Maryborough had been taunted to propose that the Rockhampton and Westwood railway should be given up. Now, for his part, he would say give up all the railways. He would give up all the public works together. The Rockhampton and Westwood railway was never asked for by the people of the north; but it was given to them by the Government as something to keep them quiet till the whole of the spoil was wasted on the Darling Downs. The people on the Downs were desirous of having a large sum of money spent in the district; and an honorable member who was now a member of the Ministry brought in a Bill to carry out the railways in the southern district. For the sake of the honorable member's influence in other respects, the measure obtained the support of the Government, and it was of course carried, and the expenditure thereafter went on. Last session, he (Mr. Fitzsimmons) voted against the Warwick railway; and he recollected that the then honorable member for Port Curtis, Mr. Douglas, opposed it in every way he could. His own opinion was, that the Government should have attended to the carrying out of the permanent works of the colony, and not have gone on with this great and extravagant waste. The honorable member for the Western Downs, who was now a member of the Ministry, also last year opposed the Warwick railway; and he could not see with what conscience he could now

support it, when it would be possible to save £600,000 by stopping the work at once.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He did oppose the Warwick line, as the honorable member stated; but his policy had always been to support the main trunk lines of the colony.

Mr. FITZSIMMONS: Exactly; but the honorable member voted against the Warwick line as being only a branch line. Year after year, since Queensland started into existence, the Legislature had authorised large sums of money to be borrowed for public purposes. Now, that was all very well; but when the money was authorised to be borrowed, it was thought the whole of the colony would participate in the benefits of its expenditure. But such had not been the case. On the contrary, the whole of it had been spent in one corner of the colony; and the rest of the colony was left destitute. Even common roads were not made in some districts. An application was made to the Government, a few days ago, for a small though much required expenditure in a district in the north; but it could not be granted, as there were no funds. In the Darling Downs District, however, if there was a rut on a road, or a rat-hole under a bridge, a Government official was at once sent off to see to its being repaired. If the financial position of the colony was such as to justify the continuance of such a large expenditure, it would be very well that such expenditure should be continued; but under the present circumstances of the colony, he could not be a party to extravagance for the purpose of benefiting one particular district. There was the large expenditure for the railway terminus at Ipswich. What was it for but to secure the support of the electors of Ipswich? In fact, the Government were so blinded with a desire to please the Ipswich people, that they could not do justice to other parts of the colony. The Government, so far as he could see, were determined that the north should not get anything; and he almost hoped the north never would get anything, in order that the period of separation might come all the sooner.

Mr. WIENHOLT said he disagreed entirely with what had been urged by some honorable members. He could not, however, allow himself to suppose that the honorable member for Maryborough, who had brought forward the resolutions now under consideration, could wish the House to stultify itself. The honorable member knew that loans had been raised under the Loan Act for the very purpose of carrying out the Warwick railway. But he was surprised to find the honorable member wishing to have the works stopped. Very few honorable members in the House would be found to do such a thing, but he was not surprised to find the honorable member for Maryborough doing it. He was astonished to hear the honorable member for the Western Downs propose to do away with

three of the lines in the colony, provided the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba was continued. He had no doubt it would suit the interests of the honorable member's locality if the line went to Toowoomba and remained there. It would make Toowoomba the metropolis of the Colony, if that were to be the case. No doubt it would also suit the honorable member for Toowoomba if the line were to stop at that town. A great deal had been said to the effect that the line from Toowoomba to Warwick would not be reproductive. Now, he maintained that it would be one of the most productive lines in the colony. The line passed through one of the finest districts in the colony; and all the produce of the Warwick district, as well as the produce of the Clarence district in New South Wales, would be brought down by the line to Toowoomba, and thence to Ipswich and Brisbane. It had been stated that already £137,000 had been expended on the line, and what, he asked, would become of that amount if the works were to be stopped now? It would be virtually lost—at any rate it would lie dead for several years. The honorable the Secretary for Public Works had stated that in the event of this line being done away with, none of the other lines would be gone on with. Honorable members must not therefore expect that if the line were stopped, the plant would be brought down for the construction of a line between Brisbane and Ipswich. It would, in his opinion, be absurd to bring a line from Ipswich to Brisbane at present. There was a magnificently macadamised road between the two places, which made the travelling by coach as easy as travelling by rail; and then, for those who preferred travelling by water, there was the river, with excellent steamers. Therefore, before any railway was made between Brisbane and Ipswich, the roads in the interior should be attended to first. He maintained that the present financial condition of the colony was one of the reasons why the works should be gone on with. If the works were stopped now, what were they to do with all those men they had imported? It would not do to let them go away, for they would be required in a year or two. The difficulty was only temporary. In two or three years it would be possible to raise money at three or four per cent. in the English market. It would then be proposed to go on again with the works; but when they got the money, it would be found that they had lost the men.

Mr. MILES said he had to thank the honorable member for Maryborough for giving him another opportunity of voting against the Warwick railway. He could do so with a clear conscience on this occasion, for he had always opposed this line ever since he had the honor of a seat in the House. He looked upon it as nothing else but a railway swindle. There had been a good deal said about the great outlay there

had been for plant for the Warwick railway. Now, he thought there was no need for any difficulty being raised about that, for if all reports were correct as to the wear and tear of the line on the Main Range, the Government would soon be required to replace the rails; so that the plant for the Warwick line would come in very conveniently for that purpose. If the honorable member would put the several parts of the motion separately, he would vote for the first, second, and fourth paragraphs; but he would have to vote against the third, for he could not consent to the transfer of the plant from the Warwick line for the construction of a line between Brisbane and Ipswich.

Mr. B. CRIBB said that, as to the first resolution, he should not object to it, for he thought it was time the Government did reconsider the votes for expensive and unfinished public works. The Government, he thought, would not themselves object to that. As to the two resolutions that followed, he could not agree with them; because, though he would like to see a railway between Ipswich and Brisbane as early as possible, the construction of such a railway, he thought, was a work that ought to be taken up by a private company, and not by the Government; because, there being an excellent means of conveyance by a tidal river, besides that afforded by a main road, there was no such necessity for a railway as would justify its construction at the public expense. He had been often twitted with having taken an active part in the promotion of railway communication with the interior beyond Ipswich, because of the benefits it would be to the town of Ipswich, and also to himself. Now, he could assure honorable members that he never expected to derive any benefit from such railway extension. On the contrary, he saw it would be productive of loss to him, and also to the people of Ipswich generally; but was he to allow his own interest, or the interest of Ipswich, to stand in the way of what appeared to be for the public good? The people of Ipswich shewed their public spirit in giving way for the furtherance of the public good. As to the railway to the interior paying better if the line were completed from Brisbane to Ipswich, he maintained that such would not be the case, either on the score of passengers or of goods traffic, for there were only five or six passengers travelled by the coach daily, on an average; and as to wool, it was brought to Brisbane from Ipswich at a penny farthing per bale per mile, or half-a-crown for the whole distance, which was much below the rates charged by the Government on the railway. There was no doubt that when a railway was made from Brisbane to Ipswich, whenever that might be, it would be found to be a great mistake, and those who took part in promoting it would be greatly disappointed.

Now, the great object of advancing railways into the interior was to promote the profitable occupation of the Crown lands. He had known of instances in which it cost the whole of the wool of a station to pay for the carriage of it down and the carriage of goods up to the station—a distance of six hundred miles. A railway between Ipswich and Brisbane would only be beneficial to the two towns, but railways to the interior were of incalculable advantage to large and widely spread districts. He thought, that if the proposition as to the Warwick line was to be entertained at all, the works should be postponed till the arbitrator in the existing dispute between the Government and the contractor had sent in his decision. If the decision should be against the Government, it might, he thought, be well for the Government to consider whether they should not at once stop the railway works beyond Helidon, for the decision, if against the Government, would come to an immense amount of money. The honorable member then referred to the several works that had been entered upon for the improvement of the river navigation above Brisbane, and contended that honorable members were not justified in laying the cost of those works to the account of Ipswich, inasmuch as the people of Ipswich had asked for only one of those works to be undertaken, and that was the deepening of the basin. They had nothing to do with the expenditure at the Seventeen-mile Rocks or at Campbell's Flats; and he would have honorable members bear in mind, that as the works at those two places were yet unfinished it was impossible to say to what extent the expenditure was valuable or valueless. He had heard nothing but assertions that money had been thrown away upon the river between Brisbane and Ipswich. No proof had been afforded that the money had not been advantageously expended. Reference had been made to the cutting at the Seventeen-mile Rocks; but that was hardly a fair subject for criticism, inasmuch as the work was not yet finished. So far from so much money having been expended for the benefit of the people of Ipswich, they were always complaining that nothing was done for them. For the last three years promises had been made by the Government to clear certain roads in the district, to enable parties to get out to their farms, and nothing but disappointment had been the result. A memorial was sent, the other day, to the Government on the subject; which met with no response. On the other hand, money had been spent in Brisbane, and the people of Ipswich had been taxed in equal proportion. Although so much had been said about money expended upon railways, nothing had been said about money laid out on roads—thousands upon thousands. Some honorable member had stated that, whatever improvements were made, there was no likelihood of any sea-going vessels going up

the river. But vessels drawing seven feet of water had gone up, and many sea-going vessels did not draw more than six feet; and, no doubt, with a little improvement, vessels of ten feet draught would be able to get up to Ipswich. The only fear, which appeared to him to be entertained by some honorable members, was that the navigation of the river would be so far improved that goods would be taken up to Ipswich direct, without being landed in Brisbane.

Mr. STEPHENS said he did not care whether the resolutions were put *seriatim* or not, as he approved of all of them. He had been waiting for some time to hear the Colonial Treasurer inform the House where the money was to come from, if the Warwick railway were to be continued. The House had passed a Loan Bill, in the earlier part of the session, for somewhere about one million two hundred thousand pounds, and he had not heard that any of the debentures had been disposed of, or that there was any probability of getting rid of them; and, as that was the source from which the whole expenditure for the Warwick line ought to come, the House ought to have some distinct information on the subject. That, in point of fact, was, in his opinion, the real question underlying the whole of the resolutions before the House. It had been explained that £31,000 odd had already been paid to the contractors, and £76,000 paid in England for rails and rolling stock, for the Warwick line, making, altogether, nearly £108,000 already spent, out of the vote of £388,000 passed by the House during the session; so that, if the work were to be continued, there was 280,000 to be expended. Before the resolutions were thrown out, he thought the House was fairly entitled to ask the Colonial Treasurer where he expected to get that £280,000. There were the other lines to consider—the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba, and the ascent of the Main Range, which would have to be completed in preference to any other, and they would require a large sum of money. Some provision would have to be made for those works, as the £300,000 raised by Treasury bills a few months ago, it was understood, would be nearly all gone in the course of a few weeks. Now, supposing the panic in London did not pass away so quickly—and it would be some time before the rate of discount was lowered—and the Queensland debentures could not be disposed of, where was the money to come from? There would be interest amounting to, say £220,000, to pay, over which the House had no control whatever—it must simply be paid. He repeated, that, the House having voted nearly a million and a quarter of money in different sums for these works, were bound to exercise some control over its expenditure, and all the economy which could be effected by revising the Estimates would be mere cheeseparing in comparison. As far as he could see, the

finances of the colony were in this condition: the £300,000 raised by Treasury bills would be all gone in about six weeks time. The rents due last month would, perhaps, serve to carry on for another month, or perhaps two, and after that the Government would have to depend upon the Treasury Notes Bill and additional taxation. If, therefore, the session were allowed to pass without rescinding some of the votes in question, the country would be in as bad a state as ever in six months time, and he considered it the duty of honorable members to authorise the Government to suspend some of the public works, and first of all, the Warwick line. He did not think an absolute stoppage of the works would be necessary, but that they should be delayed until it was shewn where the money was to come from to complete them. He considered it was preferable to stop the works on the Warwick line rather than those on the Dalby line, or over the Main Range. He considered the Warwick line was a most impracticable one, and he did not think that the roundabout way in which it had been surveyed should be adopted. It was seen that the carriers could compete successfully with some portion of the present line; and if they could do that surely they would be better able to compete with a line that was taken some eighteen or twenty miles further round than was necessary. He thought that he had given sufficient reasons for voting for the resolution referring to the Warwick line, more especially as he did not believe that it would be constructed for the amount set down—£388,000.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The contract is taken.

Mr. STEPHENS: Again, they found that the Warwick line was estimated to be constructed at the rate of £6,300 a mile, and that between Brisbane and Ipswich, over a country which presented no engineering difficulties whatever, it was estimated that the line would cost £13,200 per mile. How could the Government account for that circumstance? He maintained that if the money were forthcoming it should be expended where it was likely to be reproductive—where there was the best chance of its paying interest. If they were to saddle the colony with a large debt, they were bound to expend the money thus obtained in the way that should be most suitable to the greatest number of colonists; and surely it could not be argued that any railway could possibly pay so well as one between Brisbane and Ipswich. With reference to the navigation of the river between the two towns, he was of opinion that so long as it was a debatable question, whether the money that was being expended on the river was doing any good or not, no money should be thus spent. He would again express his intention of voting for the whole of the resolutions, whether they were put *seriatim* or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS explained that the reason why the estimate for a line between Brisbane and Ipswich was so high was the fact that the cost for bridging would amount to £45,570, and the cost of land £20,000.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, although the honorable member for South Brisbane, and other honorable members, had no doubt advanced the interests of their constituents, it must be borne in mind that the money had been borrowed for a special purpose—to construct a particular line of railway, and that to expend it upon any other work would lower the colony in the estimation of those who advanced it. If it were known on the Stock Exchange that money had been borrowed for one work and expended upon another, the credit of the colony would be ruined, and the Queensland debentures would find no purchasers. That was the common-sense view of the question, and he submitted that honorable members who represented the true interests of the country could not support the resolutions before the House. The honorable member for South Brisbane had asked where the money for the Warwick railway was to come from, and had also stated, as well as the honorable member for Maryborough, that there would be £220,000 to pay for interest in 1867. But the returns of expenditure, as far as they had been made out—and he believed they were perfectly correct—shewed that there was only £201,000 interest to pay next year, inclusive of interest on Treasury bills. And he believed that, thanks to the liberality of the House, the sale of debentures, sanctioned under the Loan Act of 1866, together with the authority to raise another £300,000 by issuing Treasury bills, and a certain Bill called the Treasury Notes Bill, would place the Treasury in such a position that there would be no occasion to ask for another sixpence to fulfil all the contracts entered into, and to meet all the requirements of the Government, and even to leave the very large margin of £600,000 to carry on the public works of the colony. He could not think there was any ground for alarm, or that the honorable member for Maryborough should have drawn such a doleful picture of the position of the colony. He again repeated, that there would be a margin of £600,000 ready cash to meet all engagements if the permanent loan met with a good market; and he could inform honorable members that he had caused instructions to be sent home by the last mail not to sell the debentures under ninety per cent. He had been sorry to see, the other day, that the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales had admitted that he had sent positive instructions to sell the securities of the colony for whatever they would fetch. He (Mr. McLean) felt sure the people of Queensland would not desire him to adopt a similar course. He was not at all afraid but that the Government would be able to carry out all its engage-

ments with credit, in spite of the little cloud which temporarily obscured the prospects of the colony. He did not think it was right that any honorable member should endeavor to prove that the affairs of the colony were in a worse condition than they really were. He could again assure the House that the Government was in a position to meet all the engagements which had been entered into, so that no breach of faith should be committed.

Mr. PALMER said that, during the short time he had held a seat in that House, he had listened to many speeches with amusement, many with a feeling of weariness, but none with so much pain as the speech just made by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. Instead of attempting to reply to the questions put by the honorable member for South Brisbane, he had afforded the House his opinions upon a variety of other questions. The main question was still unanswered: where was the money to come from if the Warwick line of railway were to be completed? Was it to be taken from the £600,000 to be raised by Treasury bills, or from the sale of debentures authorised to be appropriated for that purpose? The honorable the Treasurer knew very well that not one shilling had been realised upon those debentures, and yet he expected the assent of the House to prosecute extravagant public works, and to make railways which would never pay. The honorable member had stated that it would be a breach of faith to discontinue the construction of the Warwick railway. But he affirmed that the House never authorised the expenditure of one fraction of the money raised by the issue of Treasury bills upon the construction of railways. That was very well known. The first £300,000 was to get the colony out of a crisis, and the next £300,000 was voted for a special purpose. He hoped that was clearly laid down in the Act. With regard to the resolutions before the House, he must express his astonishment at the conduct of the Government of Queensland. It appeared to him that for years they had been endeavoring to get into debt as far as they could obtain credit, and when they were called upon for payment, they shirked every legitimate mode of meeting their liabilities. He would point out what those modes were. In the first place, to put a stop to the horribly extravagant railway works; in the second, to sell their securities at a slightly reduced rate; and, in the third place, to increase the taxation. He might mention a fourth, viz., to reduce the expense of the Civil Service; but he put that on one side altogether, because the saving which could thus be effected could only be a mere bagatelle in comparison with the retrenchment required. Well, the only mode of meeting the difficulty which seemed to strike the Government as worthy of adoption, was to increase the taxation; and that they appeared willing to adopt to any extent. Already, the colony,

with its 90,000 inhabitants, was taxed beyond all precedent, and yet the Government seemed as little disposed as ever to retrench. Under such circumstances, it would have been supposed that a motion like that brought forward by the honorable member for Maryborough would have been adopted long ago. But all the Government seemed to consider was how much they could get out of the people of the colony by means of taxation, and how to get authority to raise more money by Treasury bills, when they found themselves in the next fix. He believed it was a mistake to commence so many costly works, and that the proper course was to stop them gradually, and, as immigration was virtually stopped, to allow the colony to absorb the superfluous labor. He thought, also, that those persons who were chiefly interested in the Warwick railway would find themselves greatly mistaken in the advantages they would derive from it when they came to add the increased duties to the price of their stores; they would find the facility of carriage would not compensate for the additional cost of the goods. It had frequently been shewn that branch lines would never pay; and he was astonished to hear the Colonial Treasurer come down to the House and advocate the continuance of the Warwick railway. He had no desire to repudiate any contract entered into by the Government; but he thought they ought at once to point out to the contractor that they were in difficulties, and that, not being in a position to carry out the contract at present, they were prepared to pay him his forfeit. That was the proper course to pursue; not to involve the country in the expenditure of another £300,000, but to stop the works at once, and wait for better times. It seemed to him perfectly absurd to go on with such unnecessary and expensive works, when not one shilling could be got out of the Treasury for any really necessary purpose. It was only the other day that he had had occasion to apply for a small sum of £150 on behalf of the trustees of the wharf at St. Lawrence, Broad Sound, and had been informed by the Minister for Public Works that there was no vote out of which he could possibly pay that small sum to finish the wharf in question. And yet the House was asked to throw away £300,000, to make a railway which would never pay—which the carriers would compete with, and beat. He must again express his astonishment at the conduct of the Government. They ought to have received the resolutions with pleasure, and adopted them as the best means to be pursued to reduce the large debt which had been contracted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he must also plead guilty to a little astonishment; and he thought it was very natural to do so, considering the insidious nature of the resolutions before the House. He had not heard

one sound fair argument in their favor. He had characterised them as insidious, because it was evident that the honorable member who had tabled them in the form in which they were presented to the House, intended to entrap honorable members. If the honorable member had only intended to ask the House to reduce the public expenditure by the amount voted for the railway from Toowoomba to Warwick, he would have brought forward a motion of a very different character. It was quite clear that, as the resolutions were worded, honorable members could not address themselves to the subject at all, and that every one had gone off upon some pet subject of his own. He contended that the honorable member for Maryborough should have come down to the House with a distinct motion for the discontinuance of the Warwick line. If he expected the House to decide upon the construction of a railway between Brisbane and Ipswich, he should have brought down a distinct resolution for that. If he expected the House to come to a resolution in reference to the navigation of the Brisbane and Bremer rivers, he should also have had a distinct resolution on the subject. Did the honorable member for a moment suppose that the House was to be entrapped by a motion of that kind? If so, upon what grounds?—for he had heard none. The honorable member for South Brisbane had, however, brought the debate back to a point to which he (the Secretary for Public Works) would refer. That honorable member, and the honorable member for Port Curtis, had inferred that the House had committed a great dereliction of duty in having authorised certain works, before the money was in the coffers of the Treasury which had been voted for the construction of those works. If that were a just and proper ground, why, he asked, did not the House perform their clear duty, and put a stop to all the public works of the colony? Why continue the Warwick railway, or the Northern railway, or the railway from Ipswich to Toowoomba; or, in point of fact, why expend one shilling until the Government had the money in their hands? But, he would ask, was that a proper ground, a business ground, to take up? and he would say, that if a young colony like this were to wait till it had the means in its own hands, it might wait till eternity. It had not been the habit of this colony, nor had it been the habit of the mother country, or of any of the old countries, to wait—to wait till it could do without that borrowing power which he was glad to say the colony had had up to the present time. But those honorable gentlemen had convicted themselves, and had convicted the House, of a dereliction of duty; because there should be no further expenditure till the whole of the money was in the coffers of the Treasury. He heard the honorable member for Maryborough allude to the feelings that influenced honorable members

when those works were entered upon at an earlier date, and the honorable member told the House it was clear that honorable members had then no idea of any limit to the borrowing powers of this young colony. But was there anything more false on the face of it than such an opinion as that? because, if there was anything more clear than another, as to the intentions and feelings of the House and of the country when the railways were entered upon, it was the opinion, strongly put forth, that the borrowing powers of the colony had a limit—and that limit was the amount of the contracts entered into. Contracts had been entered into, and having been entered into, honorable members would be unworthy of their position as men, in having undertaken works such as those, in this young country, if they were to be frightened by a slight check such as had occurred. If they had found themselves in an exceptional position, as regarded other colonies, or as regarded the mother country—if it had been found that there was any reason why they should have at this moment a less borrowing power than before, on grounds that did not exist elsewhere, there would be something in the arguments of the honorable member for Maryborough. But that was not the case. A temporary check had occurred—a temporary crisis—one, no doubt, of a serious and of no ordinary character; but was that any reason, seeing the check was temporary, they should go back, and should adopt a retrograde course such as was now proposed; and that, too, before it was found they were not able to borrow money in the English market? If it so happened that they found their position in the English market was such that they could not borrow further, then he should say stop all the railways. But why stop at this point? The honorable member was not able to say that two months hence they would not be able to carry on the works; but, on the other hand, the honorable member was in a position to say that the contracts could be carried on. Had anything been heard that would lead to the belief that they could not carry on the works? Had any change taken place in their position, except that which had taken place from a temporary crisis, that would lead any honorable member to believe that the borrowing power of the colony was one bit less, as compared with other colonies—that it was one bit less, except as to the restrictions of its borrowing power? He had heard, in the course of this debate, subjects entered upon and discussed that to his mind were altogether foreign to what must have been uppermost in the mind of the honorable member for Maryborough in arguing this question. If the honorable member had any intention to effect a reduction of expenditure—and he must say he felt a considerable degree of doubt as to his intention, if he read the resolutions aright; because, unless those

subjects were taken by themselves—unless they were subjects that had for their intention a reduction of the expenditure of the country, they were not fit subjects for the consideration of the House on the present occasion. Now, that, he contended, could not have been the intention of the honorable member for Maryborough, because at the same time as he tabled a motion for a reduction of expenditure in one part of the country he asked for an increased expenditure in another. He had heard some honorable members say—the honorable member for South Brisbane was one—an honorable member to whom he gave some credit for the way he handled this subject—that the Warwick line should be discontinued, in an engineering point of view—that it was, and that it had been, so distorted, and thereby so increased in its length, and so altered in its curves, that it had become a more expensive line than there was any need for it to be. But, in making that assertion, had the honorable member shewn his own engineering skill, or had he put forward anything but his own assertion?—and there was nothing in that. Admitting those two great questions: the one as to the payment of money, and the other as to the engineering peculiarities of the Warwick line—he would ask, upon what other grounds was it proposed the line should be discontinued? Was it because so much money had been expended that they were to allow it absolutely to evaporate and be of no further use to the colony? Surely, that could not be the intention of the honorable member; and in the face of the fact that at present they were not prepared to say what would follow, or that they would not be able to carry out this contract as well as other contracts, he would object to the motion—he would object to it upon this special ground, that there was nothing to shew, beyond what the Government had shewn, why this contract should be discontinued any more than other contracts. He trusted that other honorable members would take a similar view of this motion, and would reject it.

Mr. ROYDS said there were certain of the resolutions with which he cordially agreed. The first, in particular, he thought, was unexceptionable. There were a great many money votes it might, he thought, be well to reconsider. It was very desirable they should get out of any of the contracts that had been taken, provided they could get out of them without being at too heavy a loss. That was a question which the second resolution left almost entirely in the hands of the Government, for it said—

“So much as is practicable of the railway line under construction between Toowoomba and Warwick, and can be agreed upon with the contractor, ought to be discontinued.”

He presumed the honorable member put those few words in to allow of whatever terms might be asked by the contractor.

The construction of the line to Warwick could, he thought, be very well postponed for a few years without any great pecuniary loss. It was a line that could be done very well without at present, and its discontinuance would relieve the finances of the colony for a certain time. He had himself very grave doubts as to the line paying; though it possibly might if the wheat producing lands along the line turned out as it seemed to be expected they would. It was altogether in that point the line had any chance of paying. With regard to removing the plant and applying it to the construction of a line between Ipswich and Brisbane, that, it seemed to him, was out of the question altogether. If they merely looked at some figures that were submitted to the House by the honorable the Secretary for Public Works, it would be seen that, instead of decreasing their expenditure during the next eighteen months, they would, to carry out the proposition in this resolution, have to go to a larger expenditure than would be required to carry out the Warwick line. He hoped the Warwick line would not at present be continued beyond Allora. It was a point upon which there was a good deal of discussion when the Loan Bill was before the House; and he thought it would effect a saving of £100,000 to stop the line till they could see their way to incur that extra expense. He did not see that a line between Ipswich and Brisbane was likely to pay, for as the honorable member for West Moreton had pointed out, the river could compete very well with the railway, even at present rates. The charge per ton by the river for the conveyance of goods between Ipswich and Brisbane was about six or eight shillings, while, on the railway, for a proportionate distance, the charge was from fifteen to twenty shillings. It was a well known fact, that in England canals could compete with railways; and many of the railway companies, finding the competition of canals in the carriage of goods so injurious, were under the necessity of buying them up. At the present time, between Liverpool and Manchester, the railway and canal were working alongside of each other; and this, of course, was the case because the carriage by water was cheaper than the carriage by railway. It was thought in England, when railways were started, that canals would be ruined, but it was now found that they were paying better than they did before. The honorable member for the Western Downs, with his usual consistency and delicacy of feeling, twitted the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Raff, with having advocated the expenditure for the clearing of the bar and the deepening of the river below Brisbane, for the purpose of enabling vessels to get up to his wharf. The honorable member, Mr. Taylor, when he did so, must have forgotten that he had proposed, just previously, that all the lines of railways should be stopped, except the line to

Toowoomba; and in the completion of that line, the honorable member was, perhaps, as much interested as the honorable member for North Brisbane was interested in the deepening of the river below Brisbane. It had been stated that the only condition upon which the contractor would consent to transfer his plant, and construct a line between Brisbane and Ipswich, was, that he should afterwards be permitted to return and finish the Warwick line. Now, that would be altogether out of the question. As to the fourth resolution, which proposed the stoppage of the works on the river, he could not altogether agree with it. He was not sure that it would be a very wise thing to stop the works entirely, though he thought a greater amount of economy might be exercised in carrying on the works.

Mr. PUGH said it had not been his intention to speak at this stage of the debate, nor did he intend now to make any lengthy remarks on the motion before the House. He agreed with some of the criticisms passed upon the resolutions by the honorable member for the Darling Downs, because, when he came to analyse the resolutions, there did not appear to him to be much in them; and when they came to be put to the House, he would move an amendment on the third resolution. That amendment he would put forward now, more as a suggestion than an amendment. It was merely the substitution of the word "shall," for the word "might," so that the resolution would read thus—"That the construction of a line of railway from Brisbane to Ipswich shall be entertained as a basis for negotiating with the said contractor." It was merely a verbal alteration he would propose. He quite agreed with the first resolution, and he thought the remarks that had been made by the honorable member for Port Curtis, and the honorable member for South Brisbane, ought to have some weight with the honorable the Treasurer, who, he was sorry to find, was absent from the House the greater part of the time the honorable member for Port Curtis was addressing the House. It was the duty of honorable members, especially at the present time, to consider where the money was to come from, before they resolved that the Brisbane and Ipswich line should be gone on with. If it was ascertained that the debentures for the construction of the line were not saleable in London, and that they had to provide for the work by the sale of ten per cent. bills, they would, should they carry out the line, have to pay too dear for their whistle. If the Warwick line was to be stopped, and the moneys, nevertheless, to be spent, they ought to find out how it could be expended, so as to yield the greatest benefit with the least outlay; but he would not go into the question of railways now, as they would have all the speeches on the subject over again when the House, in Committee of Supply, came to deal with the vote for rivers. He quite agreed with the

resolutions of the honorable member for Maryborough, if he would consent to make the slight alteration on the third resolution he had suggested; and he hoped the honorable member would also consent to the resolutions being put *seriatim*. Lest, however, he should not do so, he would now move—

That in the third resolution the word “shall” be substituted for the word “might.”

Mr. FORBES said he would not have risen to speak to the resolutions at that late hour, but that he thought there were some matters which had not been alluded to, and to which he would call the attention of the House. Looking at the resolutions as they stood on the paper, and viewing them as a whole, he must say that he could not vote for them. He could not conceive what advantage there would be in voting for the resolutions. He thought, besides, that any steps to prevent the expenditure of money for those public works must be taken under an Act of Parliament. It was by an Act of Parliament that the expenditure was authorised; and he thought, therefore, it was only by an Act of Parliament the expenditure could be stopped. He had no doubt the intention of the honorable member, in proposing to stop the railway to Warwick, was a good one; but when honorable members were assured by the honorable the Secretary for Public Works that it would cost the country £300,000 to transfer the contract from the Warwick to the Ipswich and Brisbane line, he thought there could be little hope of the proposition being agreed to. As to the success of a line between Ipswich and Brisbane, he could find no instance where railways constructed parallel with navigable rivers were able to compete with steam vessels. In fact, traffic had always been carried on at a cheaper rate on the rivers than on the railways. He found, on looking at the case of the railway between Parramatta and Sydney, that passengers were carried by the steamer at about one-half the price at which they were carried by the railway. The honorable member for Maryborough, in bringing forward his resolutions, alluded to the Parramatta river, and said there were no dredging operations carried out upon it. Now, as far as his recollection went, he thought there had been a great deal of dredging carried out on that river. At Redbank, near Parramatta, if his memory served him right, there had been a dredge at work for several years; as it was impossible for the steamers to get above that point at low water, and passengers had to be conveyed from Redbank to Parramatta by omnibus, a distance of a mile or thereabout. As to the operations at the Seventeen-mile Rocks on the Brisbane River, he thought there had not been such skill shewn as there might have been in clearing the river. A mistake, at any rate, it would appear, had been committed; and the captains of steamers assured him that if a sum of £300 or so

had been expended in clearing away the rocks at the Brisbane side of the passage, more benefit would have been obtained than by the expenditure that had taken place on the other side of the passage. As to the deepening of the Bremer, he did not think the dredge should be removed from where it had been at work for some time past. He believed the expenditure of a small additional sum would place the river in such a state as would enable people to get up their goods from the ships that arrived in the bay with less delay than they could at present; and it was absolutely necessary for the mercantile interests of Ipswich, as would be seen by the evidence given by the Collector of Customs before the Civil Service Committee, that something should be done to enable goods to be taken to Ipswich direct. At present, the Ipswich merchants had to get their goods cleared at the Custom-house by Brisbane merchants, who thus obtained a knowledge of their shipments, and of the invoice prices. Besides that, as the goods had to be bonded in Brisbane, the merchants by whom the clearances were effected took care that Ipswich goods of the same kind as their own should not leave the bonded warehouses till their own goods were unshipped, lest the Ipswich merchants might anticipate them in the market. Now, that was not a state of things that should be allowed to continue. The river was the natural highway to the interior; and, as well as the goods that were carried up the river, more than two-thirds of the whole productive wealth of the colony was brought down by it. Everywhere it had been considered a most imprudent thing to run a railway parallel with a river. He thought it would be impossible for a railway to be constructed that could compete with a river. If the railway could carry goods at five shillings a ton, steam punts would be able to take them at eighteenpence a ton. Considering the financial difficulty in which the colony was placed at present, he did not see they would be justified in entertaining the scheme proposed in the third resolution; and as the finishing of the works where the dredge was at present employed would be of great value, he thought it would be improper to remove the dredge till the work was finished. If the resolutions should be put to the House as a whole, he would vote against them; and if they should be put *seriatim*, seeing they were so connected with each other, and that they formed a scheme that he could not possibly view but with the greatest distrust, he should feel equally bound to vote against them.

Mr. GROOM said he had listened very attentively to the debate that had taken place; and he must say that, notwithstanding all he had heard, he should be constrained to vote for the whole of the resolutions. He regretted, however, that he was compelled to do so, because he supported the Warwick line

when it was first proposed, but he then did so under a grievous misrepresentation as to the financial state of the colony. He would not only vote for the motion as it was, but he would vote for it if it also proposed the striking off of the Toowoomba and Dalby line, and also the works at the Main Range. It was impossible for any one to shut his eyes to the present position of the colony; and as to the light cloud, as the honorable the Colonial Treasurer called it; that was passing over them at present, he must say he thought it was one of those clouds that had too little of a silver lining to pass very rapidly away. It appeared to him that when they took into consideration all their engagements, they had not yet nearly seen the end of the means that would have to be adopted to meet them. He would not detain the House with any lengthened remarks, as he intended to support the resolutions. He knew there was a general outcry that the Warwick line should be stopped; and he was certain that the line would never have been granted if correct information had been placed before the House as to the financial condition of the colony, when the Loan Bill was before the House at the early part of the session.

MR. WALSH, in reply, said he felt that this motion, or those resolutions, rather, had not received that treatment from the House which their great importance entitled them to; and he certainly felt that he, the mover of the resolutions, had been most unfairly treated, not only by the members of the Government, who had gone out of their way, as it seemed to him, to throw distrust on his motives, but by other honorable members, who, apparently desirous of being able to publish to the world pretexts for their own inconsistencies, had ventured on the task of assailing his motives. In fact, they had actually done so for the purpose of shielding themselves. He regretted that the motion, which was offered to the House for the sole one object of endeavoring to assist the colony out of the dilemma in which it was at present placed—of endeavoring to assist the Government in the arduous task, now they had undertaken it, of helping the colony out of its difficulties—knowing that he had but one object in view, that of desiring to assist the Government, he thought the representatives of the various constituencies of the colony and the members of the Government might have treated him differently. He was astonished honorable members should have indulged in sneers and personalities against the mover of the resolutions. It was unworthy to the Parliament, and unworthy to the constituencies that sent members to represent them in Parliament, that he should be so grossly treated as he had been. The honorable the Minister for Public Works astonished him by commencing his clap-trap remarks, which they were from first to last, by charging him with an endeavor to blind honorable members' eyes. So far from that being the case, he

had to confess that he did not consider himself able to do so. He had not the ability for that. He looked upon honorable members of the House, and of the Government, as far too able in the art of deceiving, and of discovering deception, for him to be able to blind them; and, unknown to themselves, perhaps, he could assure them that they had given him credit for possessing a quality which his merits did not entitle him to. He did not intend to blind the members of the Government, or the members of the House, when he brought forward the resolutions. He had but one object in view—that of desiring to relieve the colony from that fatal position which all Governments, and all Parliaments, had assisted to plunge the country into; and, having that sole motive, he thought the Government might have applied themselves more to the question, and less to the mover. What would the honorable the Minister for Public Works think, if every time he brought forward some useful motion, and announced some view for the benefit of the country, he (Mr. Walsh) got up and said the honorable gentleman was endeavoring to blind honorable members? and he would now, when he was endeavoring to serve the country, ask the honorable member, when he was unable to convict him of a crime, to decline charging him with one. The honorable the Minister for Public Works had said, that if that abominable Toowoomba and Warwick line were transferred to between Brisbane and Ipswich a new loan would have to be contracted. Now, that was an utter fallacy. There would be no need whatever for a new loan; and a simple resolution of Parliament would be sufficient for the transfer of the line. It would not require an Act of Parliament; for there was no Act of Parliament that said a railway should be made between Toowoomba and Warwick. There was only an Act that said that money should be raised. Again, the honorable the Minister for Public Works endeavored to blind the eyes of the House, when he said that if the proposition were carried out £130,000 would be as good as wasted. That was the inference the honorable member would have the House to draw from the statement he made. That was the amount the country had committed itself to for plant and rolling stock, and the honorable gentleman wished the House to understand that this plant and rolling stock would not do for the other lines—for the Ipswich and Brisbane, and the Dalby and Toowoomba lines,—or for the repair of those portions of the lines that time and traffic would wear out. If the honorable member chose to insist on the country spending money that it could not raise, let him use fair arguments and quote proper figures. Another extraordinary argument the honorable gentleman advanced was this—or, rather, he wished the House to understand—that the Government had had no intercourse with the contractor on the subject of the removal of

this line. Well, he would grant that such was the case. It was, however, well known that the contractor had had conversations on the subject with members of this House; and that he had given forth opinions and made offers that would have justified the Government, if they felt anxious on the matter, in ascertaining what he would do. But the honorable the Minister for Public Works said the Government had had no intercourse with the contractor; and he followed up his allusion to the contractor by telling the House what the contractor would not do. Now, he wished to know by what process the honorable member discovered what the contractor would not do. Was it by intuition, or by what means? And if the Government could know what the contractor would not do, why did they not carry their abilities a little further and enable themselves to inform the House as to what he would do? He thought it was only reasonable to expect, that if the honorable the Minister for Public Works could tell them by intuition what the contractor would not do, he should be as able, by the same power, to tell them what he would do. He felt that it was impossible for him to answer all the objections that had been taken to the motion. Some of them, indeed, as well as the sneering allusions that had been made to his motives, were beneath contempt, and beneath notice. The honorable the Minister for Public Works, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, also made speeches which he was very sorry to hear. He was sorry to hear the speech of the honorable the Treasurer, because the whole tenor of the speech, and the manner of the honorable gentleman, shewed that it was not really the interest of the country he had at heart; but that having embarked in a certain financial scheme, he was determined to carry out his policy, be it right or wrong. The honorable gentleman adduced no figures, he gave the House no facts, to shew that the line would pay—that it was justified—that he knew the cost,—that he knew how much it would take to make a compromise—no facts or figures of the kind were supplied; but the honorable gentleman went on to shew how, by the consent of the House, and Acts of Parliament, he was able to raise £600,000 of Treasury notes, which would place the colony to some extent out of difficulty. As was very properly noticed by the honorable member for Port Curtis, the only inference from the speech of the honorable gentleman was, that while the money was voted for a specific purpose the honorable the Treasurer was at liberty to misappropriate it, and all for the darling, the political, object of the Warwick and Toowoomba railway. It was to the continuance of that railway that he believed the honorable member was indebted for his seat. The honorable gentleman, when he was before his constituents, did not fail to tell them that there was no other constituency in the colony able to get railways

made for themselves. This railway was entered upon without the Government knowing the price, or the cost of it, solely for political purposes; and this was the railway they were to go on with in the time of need—this was the railway which some of the £600,000 Parliament had authorised the Government to raise at the high interest of ten per cent. was to be expended upon. Now, that fact alone should have urged honorable members, one and all, to have determined that this work should be stopped, and not one penny spent upon it till the country was assured that money could be raised for it at the rate of interest which, when the vote was granted, the House was assured the money could be obtained at. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer also told the House that after borrowing the money they were bound to go on with the line. Well, even that argument would be bad enough. But the money had not yet been borrowed, and honorable members were not pressing on the Government to go on with the line before it was known if the money could be borrowed. The honorable member for Port Curtis told the House that the Government had not got the money, and that he did not believe they could raise it; and yet the honorable the Colonial Treasurer replied that the line must be gone on with. But there did not appear to be any chance of borrowing the money; and if they did see any chance of borrowing it, yet seeing the difficulty there was in paying it, they would not be justified in using it. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer had said, what would become of their credit, if they voted works one day and rescinded them another; but he (Mr. Walsh) would say, what would become of their credit, if they persisted in voting money before they knew if they could raise it, and when they knew they could not afford to spend it? When they had such facts staring them in the face—when they knew that before they could pay the interest they must tax the people over and over again—tax them at the rate of five pounds a head—five times more than they ought to be—when they knew the people were already committed to a debt of forty or fifty pounds a head, and he was sure that he was within the bounds—what would be said of them, seeing they were taxed to that amount, and committed to such a debt, if they, in the face of that, and with the inability to bear more taxation, went on borrowing and spending money on those political one-end-of-the-colony projects? Their credit would be clean gone, and no capitalist, or intending colonist, would come to a colony where they found such turpitude of conduct and such recklessness existing on the part of the Government and of the people's representatives. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer also alluded to the honor of the country, and, financially, to themselves. Well, for his part, he thought the country's

honor fled at the time the Government cheques were dishonored, when the officers of the Civil Service could not be paid—when many of the public servants had to become insolvent because their cheques could not be paid. Then, he maintained, the honor of the country was gone; and the only way they could place themselves in a sound position again was to determine not to commit themselves to undertakings their positions did not justify. The honorable the late Colonial Treasurer, the present Minister for Public Lands, had charged him (Mr. Walsh) with improper conduct. He thought it was most unbecoming of the honorable member to do so; and nothing he had said could justify the honorable member in making such an assertion. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer, that he might not be misunderstood, characterised the resolutions as insidious. Now, what in the world could there be seen to be insidious in the resolutions, if they were read by any one whose mind was not insidious itself? They were, he thought, as plain as language could put them. The first was to the effect that the impoverished state of the country “required from the Government and Parliament a reconsideration of acts and votes which authorised and provided for the carrying out of extensive unfinished public works.” Was there anything insidious in that? Would it be considered that there could be anything insidious in a man telling a friend that he was committing himself to extravagant expenditure, and to works which he would not be able to pay for? Would that be considered insidious? Would it not rather be considered as a right course to pursue? And was it not a right course for any honorable member of the House to propose for the Government to pursue?—the country being in financial difficulties. The next resolution suggested that the railway from Toowoomba to Warwick should be discontinued. Now, did that volume—that “Hansard”—not contain, page after page, argument after argument, and warning after warning, directed against the Government for their unwarrantable expenditure on the line? Did that volume not contain prophecies that the line would not pay, and denunciations of it as a political swindle on the country, which the people never could afford to pay for, and which would involve them in great financial embarrassment? With those records before them, and with the knowledge before them that they could not pay for the line, and that it never could be paid for, was there, he would ask, anything insidious in tabling a motion proposing that the work should be discontinued? Then, the third resolution, which he was indebted to an honorable friend for suggesting, was as follows:—

“That the construction of a line of railway from Brisbane to Ipswich shall be entertained as a basis for negotiating with the said contractor.”

He again asked honorable members if there was anything insidious in that resolution; or if there was anything in the resolutions as a whole to shew that his conduct in respect to the question of railways had been inconsistent? He denied that his conduct had been inconsistent. He had always expressed himself as averse to the Warwick line, and had only desired to choose the least of two evils, and to make a railway which might have some chance of paying the interest on the cost of construction. He felt disgusted at the way in which the motion had been met. Only one other motion had been treated in a similar way, and that was a motion which was brought forward in the earlier part of the session, and during the debate upon which the Government insisted that the country was committed to the Warwick railway. That argument held good until it was shewn, from the contract itself, that the country was not committed to it to the extent of £100,000. Then, again, it was argued that the line would be a paying one. But he maintained that it was a line which could never pay, and that it had only been proposed as a political scheme. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer owed his seat to the fact of his advocating the construction of that line. He had told his constituents, only a few weeks ago, that they ought to consider themselves very fortunate, as they were the only persons in the colony who would have a railway to themselves. One remarkable feature of the present debate was, the conduct of several southern members. How, in the name of common-sense, they could reconcile their conduct that evening with their duty to their constituents he could not conceive, seeing that they had advocated the construction of a line of railway through a region where a railway never ought to have been carried; and, at the same time, opposed one through the districts which they represented, and a line, too, that would be remunerative, which the other never could be. He felt satisfied that he had only done his duty to the country, in endeavoring to relieve it from a part of the expenditure to which it had been committed. The honorable Minister for Public Works had forgotten, when he talked about an Act being required for the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, that the Government did not wait for an Act before they spent money on the Warwick railway—that long before there was any Act to authorise that line, they had appropriated £100,000 for the purpose. With regard to the amendment of the honorable member for North Brisbane, Mr. Pugh, he hardly knew what to say to it. He believed the honorable member was really in favor of stopping the Toowoomba and Warwick railway; but he thought that even the honorable member for East Moreton, Mr. Cribb, could not have moved an amendment which would have been more fatal to those resolutions than the one moved by Mr. Pugh. He believed that the honorable member was

really in favor of the proposition for reducing the public expenditure, and yet his amendment might, if carried, have the effect of committing the Ministry to an impossibility.

Mr. PUGH explained that his amendment was contingent upon the previous resolution being carried.

Mr. WALSH: He had endeavored, in framing the resolutions, to be as courteous to the Government as possible; and if honorable members were sincere in their desire to retrench, the resolutions should commend themselves to their consideration. He should have no objection to consent to any amendments or alterations which had that object in view. But he must, in conclusion, warn honorable members that the public credit was suffering from an expenditure which the country could ill afford, and that unless some decisive step were taken, next year, or before then, the colony would be found in the same critical financial position it was now in.

The question was put—

Shall these resolutions be put *seriatim*?

The House divided.

Ayes, 19.
Mr. Macalister
" Bell
" Lilley
" Watts
" McLean
" Fitzsimmons
" Taylor
" Sandeman
" Haly
" Walsh
" Edmondstone
" Raff
" Groom
" Pugh
" Miles
" Palmer
" Stephens
" Poyds
" Brookes

Noes, 5.
Mr. R. Cribb
" Forbes
" Fleming
" Wienholt
" B. Cribb

The first resolution, which was as follows, was then put and passed, without a division:—

That the present condition of the financial and mercantile affairs of the colony requires from the Government and Parliament a reconsideration of those acts and votes which authorised and provided for the carrying out of extensive unfinished public works.

The second resolution—

That to relieve the country from some of the authorised expenditure, which it is now proved it can ill afford to incur, so much as is practicable of the railway line under construction between Toowoomba and Warwick, and can be agreed upon with the contractor, ought to be discontinued,—

was next put, and the House divided upon it as follows:—

Ayes, 12.
Mr. Boyds
" Sandeman
" Haly
" Walsh
" Edmondstone
" Raff
" Groom
" Pugh
" Miles
" Stephens
" Palmer
" Fitzsimmons

Noes, 12.
Mr. McLean
" Taylor
" Forbes
" Macalister
" Watts
" B. Cribb
" R. Cribb
" Fleming
" Wienholt
" Brookes
" Bell
" Lilley

The numbers being equal, the SPEAKER gave his casting vote with the ayes, and declared the question to have been resolved in the affirmative.

The third resolution—

That the construction of a line of railway from Brisbane to Ipswich shall be entertained as a basis for negotiating with the said contractor,—

was put and negatived on a division, as follows:—

Ayes, 7.	Noes, 17.
Mr. Edmondstone	Mr. Taylor
" Groom	" Bell
" Pugh	" Macalister
" Stephens	" McLean
" Lilley	" Forbes
" Raff	" R. Cribb
" Walsh	" Fleming
	" B. Cribb
	" Sandeman
	" Wienholt
	" Fitzsimmons
	" Palmer
	" Miles
	" Brookes
	" Haly
	" Royds
	" Watts

The fourth and fifth resolutions, which were as follows, were agreed to without division:—

That it is desirable to stop further expenditure on the works for improving the navigation of the river between Brisbane and Ipswich.

That the foregoing resolutions be transmitted to the Legislative Council, for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.