

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 8 JUNE 1875

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 8 June, 1875.

New Member.—Continental Railway Bill.

NEW MEMBER.

The Honorable WILLIAM FRYAR, Esquire, who had resigned his seat, in consequence of his acceptance of the office of Secretary for Public Lands, was sworn in, and took his seat as member for the electoral district of East Moreton.

CONTINENTAL RAILWAY BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved—

That the Speaker leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the further consideration of this Bill.

The question was put and passed, and the House accordingly went into committee.

The question that the Chairman report progress and ask leave to sit again was put and negatived.

Question—That clause 3, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM (who spoke from the Opposition cross benches) said that he wished at the outset to state that his addressing the committee from that particular place had no significance whatever as regarded the remarks he was about to make; his sole reason was, that the acoustic properties of the chamber being bad, he wished the few observations he made to be heard by honorable members on both sides of the House. Clause 3, which was at present before the committee, had been already amended by the honorable member in charge of the Bill, and as to the whole of the Bill, he should make some remarks by-and-bye. At present, he intended to refer to a few amendments he proposed to introduce. He believed that honorable members regretted that those amendments, and some which had been made before, had not been circulated earlier; but the fact was, that he had found that the work he had taken in hand was somewhat greater than he had anticipated,

and although he had used every effort in his power to have them circulated before, he had found it quite impossible to do so. He certainly should have been glad if it had been in accordance with the order of the Government business to have postponed the further consideration of the question until the next day, so that his amendments could have been carefully considered by honorable members before going to the House; but as such was not in accordance with the ideas of the Government of transacting the business of the country, he was obliged to go on with them. He proposed, without any further preliminary remarks, to go at once *in medias res*. Now the Bill which had gone so far, and to the principle of which they were pledged, contained some most important points. In the first place, it provided for making a railway from Dalby to Roma, and, although that had not been expressed in the Bill, it had been stated by the Government that the work should be undertaken as soon as possible. Another principle was, that the railway should be constructed by the sale of Crown lands, at an upset price of not less than ten shillings an acre. The third principle was, that a certain amount of land was to be set apart to be appropriated for railway purposes. The fourth principle was, that in order that the railway might be commenced before the necessary steps be taken to bring the Crown lands into the market, an advance should be made by the Colonial Treasurer, not exceeding £250,000, with which to commence such railway, such advance to be repaid by the sale of Crown lands. Now, all those principles he had embodied in his Bill; he did not mean to say that he had adopted them all in the same form; but they had been introduced, although in a somewhat different form. It certainly contained a few amendments on what might be called subordinate principles of the Bill, but they were subordinate principles only. The first was the sale of land in order to construct the railway—that was, that although a sum of money was to be advanced for the commencement of the railway, yet there should be Crown lands reserved for its completion, by the sale of which the advance of £250,000 might be repaid, probably before a section of the line was opened—upon that principle, he confessed, he had an amendment. It appeared to be a subordinate principle, but the amendment upon it, which he had drawn up, had been approved, not only by honorable members on his own side of the House, but also by some on the Government side; so that it would be quite in accordance with usage, if the Government accepted the principle he proposed, which would be better than selling the lands before the railway was completed. The Bill of the Government proposed to set aside large railway reserves, and, as soon as convenient, very large sales of the best lands would take place;—well, that he proposed to omit. He thought the better principle to adopt would be not to sell all the good land at once, but only by degrees, so that

the income derived from the increased value given to the land would be shared by the whole colony. If they first made a railway, and then brought the lands into the market, they would give the colony at large the benefit of the increment in the value of those lands. In his amendment he had amplified the idea which he had given the committee very considerably; first of all, that, instead of all lands being sold at once, the Government should have control only over one-half until the railway was completed, by which time they would have increased in value. He would not allow the Government to sell all the lands, but had provided that they should sell them in alternate blocks, the remainder to be leased by auction for a term, with the view to selling them at the end of three, five, or six years, whenever desirable, when they would have increased in value. It had been frequently stated that a large proportion of the runs to be resumed would not be at all saleable, but if they were leased by auction for five years they would be made valuable, and it would be found that the revenue to the country would be enormously increased; also that the Government would be able to do away with a great portion of the taxation under which the colony at present labored. If honorable members looked at his Bill it would be seen, first, that the Government had only power to deal with halves of the runs; and secondly, that instead of selling all the land at once, they should sell it in alternate blocks—which plan must have the effect of increasing the value of the remaining blocks in the course of a few years. Now, all his amendments he had drafted into a Bill for the information of the committee, in order to enable honorable members to see what their effect would be as a whole. They would see that no new principle was adopted, except those he had mentioned; in all other respects, the Bill was as it at present stood; in fact, the amendments he had mentioned would have rather the effect of amplifying and improving the Bill. Of course, any alteration might be looked upon as an amendment, even if it was only amplifying; but what he meant by amplifying, was to add a little to what was in the Bill already; for, whatever might be said as to the excellence of the principles of the measure, he thought it must be agreed on all sides that it was in somewhat a crude form at present, and that a great many details had been overlooked in the Bill as drafted in the first instance. The first amendment he had alluded to provided for the sale of land after the railway was made, and he thought it was not necessary for him to dilate further upon that, as it had already been debated in the House. It had, in fact, been conceded on all sides that the lands included in the railway reserves would be very much increased in value by the construction of the line; and that, as a matter of justice, that increment of value should be shared in by the colony generally, and not

enjoyed alone by those persons who were the original purchasers. It had been stated, and argued over and over again, that those lands would increase in value, and he contended that if that were the case, the whole country should gain by the increment. In regard to the proposition of selling alternate blocks, he was simply adopting the same principle as that contained in the Collier scheme, which was precisely the same as that which had been in operation in America for many years; at any rate, that was the system the Government were going to adopt, if other things had been advisable, in connection with the proposition of Messrs. Collier, and he simply wished to return to that idea. He proposed, therefore, that only one-half of the lands should be sold at first, the remaining portion not to be put into the market until the railway was completed, when, of course, it would be increased in value. Of course that amendment would not to any extent imperil the privileges of the House, as at present the tenure of the lands under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 was dependent upon the will of the House, the leases being resumable by the Government after six months' notice, unless resolutions to the contrary were passed by Parliament. His amendment provided that the runs should be dealt with just as under the Act of 1869, and that one-half should remain in the hands of the lessees, as at present, and that the other half should pass into the hands of the Government. It had been stated that they would not get enough out of the sale of lands if his amendment was carried for the construction of the line of railway from Dalby to Roma; but to that his answer was, that if more land was required, application should be made to Parliament for power to resume more within the railway reserves, with the permission of the House to sell. His proposition did not limit the Government except in the first instance. So far, his proposition might be said to amend the Bill; but still, it amplified it in very important features, and he thought that honorable members would see that it was an improvement. The alterations were not of so vital a character that the Government should think their honor was at stake in accepting them; they were all of a nature which could be accepted by the Government, and he could say that they were offered by him in the most cordial spirit, and simply with the object of improving the Bill. Another amendment also provided that in each resumption there should be provision made for roads. It had been the practice, he believed, with the Land Department, under the Act of 1869, to make those reservations; but he considered it would be better to provide, that whenever areas of not more than 10,000 acres were offered for sale, they should contain over and above the advertised area sufficient land for a two-chain road through any part of such lot as might be opened by the Secretary for Works, and that in no case should more than 12,000 acres

be included in any number of adjoining lots, unless such area be surrounded by a reserve of three chains wide for the purpose of making a road. That was an amendment in detail which he thought every honorable member would acknowledge was a decided improvement. The Government proposed in their measure that all blocks should be offered for sale by auction, and that those not sold by auction should be open afterwards to unconditional selection. The amendment he proposed on that was, he thought, a decided improvement, namely, that land which it was not considered desirable to sell should be leased by auction in blocks not exceeding twenty-five miles in area for a term of five years, as it would be almost a matter of certainty that lands which had been leased for that time would, at the termination of the lease, be more valuable, and realise more than could possibly be expected they would do under the plan proposed by the Government. He also proposed to introduce a new clause in place of clause 3, which would practically restore what had been struck out of clause 3 by the Government, and would provide not only for the creation of one railway reserve, but of any number. The principle had been contained in the clause as it originally stood in the Government Bill, as it was proposed that areas for railway reserves might be at any time defined by proclamation, in accordance with resolutions to that effect, passed by both Houses of Parliament; but, in support of their opinion that there should be only one reserve, the Government struck out a great portion of the clause. Now, the clause, as he had amended it, retained all the good features of the Government clause, and struck out all that was bad. It provided for a railway reserve from Dalby to Roma, and also for the division of the colony into four railway districts. That, he thought, must commend itself to all persons in the country, as it was equally fair to all the tax-payers of the country; for what, he would ask, could be more fair than that reserves should be made wherever it was intended to make railways, and that the proceeds from the sale of those reserved lands should be expended in the district? He had another little form of amplification as an amendment on clause 11, which, as it stood, provided that—

“The said reserve shall not nor shall any part thereof be deemed to be a railway reserve within the meaning of ‘*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868*.’”

He proposed to add to that a few words, namely:—

But all lands within two miles in a direct line of railway within the limits of any railway reserve shall be set apart as a homestead area under “*The Homestead Areas Act of 1872*,” excepting only such lands as shall be proclaimed township or other reserves.

The object of that addition was, that it was known perfectly well that when the Bill was

passed into law, and a railway was completed to a certain point, the land put up by auction would be swallowed up by large capitalists for pastoral purposes. No one could suppose that that land would be sought for agricultural purposes for many years to come; but the time might arrive when agriculture might be introduced, and the colony might be made more productive, and then it would be found that all the land was taken up by large capitalists for pastoral purposes. He did not suppose that those homestead areas would be taken up in the first or second year, or, in fact for any number of years; but he held that the time would come when there would be homestead selectors, and for them land should be reserved, on which they could settle. That had been already provided for in the Act of 1872, although that Act had not been very well carried out by the Government. It was never supposed that all the homestead areas would be taken up in a year or two; but those lands had been taken up by large capitalists, and, if they were to have the whole of the best land swallowed up by those men, the future selectors would become servants to them. But what he anticipated, was seeing a great many of these selectors, first as servants, and then, having saved money, taking up land for themselves in the areas of two miles, which he wished to have reserved for homesteads. The Government, by their Bill, would have power to proclaim water reserves and reserves for townships; but he thought there should also be the power to proclaim the reserves he mentioned in his amendment. He did not know whether it was the desire of the Government to throw overboard that sort of settlement altogether, or whether the cry for lands being reserved for small settlers had been abandoned by the Government as a cry with nothing in it—as a thing that deserved no further attention at the hands of that House; but his opinion was, that that cry had always been a just one, and one that honorable members representing the country at large should never lose sight of. The ground upon which the Government had not carried out the Homestead Act of 1872 was, because some of the areas had not been settled upon in a brief period of a few years, and they were thrown open under the conditional purchase clauses, and were taken up in large blocks by a few men who were able to go into business on a large scale. In the case of Yandilla Run, because the land was not selected in a comparatively short time, it was thrown open, and the whole of the eight square miles had, he believed, gone into the hands of two men. He did not know whether that was the object contemplated by the Minister for Lands, or that which the Government wished to achieve, but that had been the result of the action they had taken. He proposed that this two miles should be reserved for ever; they might lease it or use it in any way they pleased, so long as it was

always kept available for the purpose of being taken up by small selectors, who would by that means be able to obtain the choicest portions of the country contiguous to the railway. He proposed to exclude sub-section 10 of section 9, dealing with unwatered runs, because it was inserted to provide for certain contingencies with regard to taking the railway to the Gulf of Carpentaria through country which had never been occupied; and as their present object was to make railways through country actually in occupation, that portion of the clause would be unnecessary. He proposed that the rent payable for the land available for pastoral purposes in the leased half of each run or portion of a run in a railway reserve should not be less than ten shillings per square mile, leaving the land in all other respects as it was now. The Government Bill provided for an increase of rent, rising up to forty shillings per square mile; but that, it would be observed, only applied to new runs taken up within the railway reserve; and honorable members would observe, that if his amendment were carried, it would allow the Government to lease the runs by auction, and apply to country that had never been leased at all, and, therefore, that portion of the clause became unnecessary. A good deal had been said, the other night, about the amount of land that would be left in the schedule, and it was argued that, because some honorable members desired that the Bill should be made "The Roma Railway Bill," the real object was to prevent land beyond Roma being taken to construct the line to Roma; but he was quite prepared to allow that not only should land fifty miles on each side of the line be taken for that purpose, but that land fifty miles beyond Roma should be placed in the same position. As to the railway districts defined in the schedule, honorable members would observe that they were precisely the same as those proposed in the Financial Separation Bill, which was brought before the House some time ago. The principle was, that the railway district would consist of the chief port of outlet, and the country extending from such port back into the interior. The southern district embraced the port of Brisbane and the back country extending away to the far west, the whole of the produce of which came into Brisbane. The reason why the district should be defined in this way was obvious. The men in Brisbane would derive as much benefit from the railway to Roma as the men in Roma; and, if the navigation of the port of Brisbane were improved, and freights were reduced, the man in the far west would derive as much benefit as the man in Brisbane, or the man anywhere upon the line. His position might not be brought quite equal to that of the man on the line, but he would derive proportionate benefit, because the distance of dray carriage would be diminished by as many miles as the railway was long. It therefore

appeared to him, that the various portions of the Southern district were bound together by bonds of mutual advantage, which pointed out that it was a proper district to establish in view of the proposal embodied in his amendments. With regard to the Wide Bay and Burnett district, he must confess that he had always looked upon it as a disadvantage to have such a small district by itself. But although the back country attached to the ports of Maryborough and Bundaberg was not extensive, still, it was extremely rich in its properties for pastoral occupation, and also in minerals and timber; in point of fact, they found that Maryborough was, at the present time, one of the most prosperous and flourishing towns in the colony. Going further north, they found Gladstone, Rockhampton, and Broomsound, all draining the large extent of country which might be very properly associated with those ports in forming another district. The Leichhardt and the districts at its back, the Mitchell and North Gregory districts, formed as perfect a district to the ports of Rockhampton and Broomsound as the back country contained in the Southern district did to Brisbane, their interests in regard to public works being identical. As they went further north, the matter, he confessed, became more vague, in consequence of a large portion of the territory being unoccupied, and there being several small ports draining the country; and until there was a larger amount of settlement, it was hard to say what particular ports would drain the various portions of the country. He, therefore, thought it right to include these places, as they were in the Financial Separation Bill, in one large district. He now came to the amendment, or amplification, which he considered the most important of all, and which he earnestly hoped the Government themselves would take up and embody in the Bill. The principle of the amendment was, to provide for the establishment of railway districts throughout the colony, including districts in which it was not at present proposed to construct railways. Land sales were now going on in all parts of the colony. In this particular case of the construction of the railway from Dalby to Roma, they would have extensive land sales held, from the proceeds of which the railway would be made; but in the Wide Bay and Burnett, and in the northern districts, they should have sales going on, and, so far as they knew at present, no railways were to be made in those districts. What then was the position? They were selling land in those districts, the proceeds of which went into general revenue, and the railway in the South would be made from that source; and he contended they should extend the same advantages to the districts he proposed to create as they conferred upon the Western district by this Bill. The amendment then provided, that the colony having been divided into these districts, a percentage, which he

put down at fifty, but that would be a matter for determination by the House—that proportion of all lands sold should be credited to the respective districts in which they were sold; but it did not follow that it would be taken from the public revenue of the colony. He would take the Wide Bay and Burnett district, and he would assume, for the time being, that no railway was authorised to be constructed in that district. Land sales were held, and in the course of a year, they might suppose that £100,000 worth of land was sold in that district. That money would go properly to the consolidated revenue, to be applied to the general purposes of the colony, and the Wide Bay and Burnett district would get credit for £50,000, and the remaining half would go to paying their share of public works, other than railways, and of the government of the country. That might go on, and they might find in the course of a few years that the Wide Bay and Burnett district would have advanced to the colony £200,000 or £300,000; and whenever it should be considered necessary to construct a railway in that district, it would become incumbent on the country to repay that district in that form; they would simply have the money applied to the actual construction of the railway. In the Northern district, in the same way, the proceeds of the sales of land would be credited to the district, and advanced by that district to the general revenue for the time being, and when the time came that a railway should be determined upon, the first duty of the country would be to restore the money derived from such sales. That was a perfectly just principle; he would not say it was “the thin end of the wedge,” because that was generally applied to some bad object in the long run, or to some object which he might wish to see attained, but others might not; but he would point out that it was a step in the direction of local self-government. That public works should be constructed by the revenue of the district in which they were carried out, was the very desirable object they all wished to achieve. They heard on all sides how desirable it was that local works should be made a local charge, and be carried out under local supervision, and the time had arrived when it should be carried out in many districts. It should be applied to all districts, and it would then be no longer the duty of a member of the House, in the opinion of his constituents, to see how much money he could get for the particular district he represented. They now saw members zealous in the interests of their districts in this respect, and very properly so, under existing circumstances—in fact, it could not be otherwise; but it was highly desirable that that state of things should cease. This was a small step in that direction; it was not a large step, because it applied to railways only; but the time would come when they should have railways in every district of the colony. Any

person with any foresight, looking at the vast resources of the colony, must see that the time would come, and that shortly, when they would have a net-work of railways almost equal to England. It might be many years before they were so close as they were there on account of the great difference in the extent of the two places, but that they would have them from all their ports inland he looked upon as an absolute certainty. Look at America! It was only the other day there was not a railway in the country; but now, on taking the map of that country, they would be found marked by a pretty thick line all over it. By adopting this amendment, they would materially assist the House in dealing with the whole question of local self-government, when the time came for dealing with it. He hoped the House would deal with the amendments entirely on their merits. He had gone to some trouble to draft them, and the Bill which illustrated their effect, and all he asked was, that the House should give them careful consideration, and deal with them on their merits. The Bill having been read a second time, there was no reason why the Government or their supporters should cut out the amendments simply because they were amendments. If they were for the advantage of the colony, the Government should carry them out, and believing that they were, he hoped they would do so. He moved that clause 3, as amended, be omitted, with the view of inserting the following new clause in its place:—

The colony shall be divided into four railway districts as described in the schedules to this Act marked B C D and E and fifty per centum of the proceeds of all lands exclusive of lands in railway construction reserves alienated in fee-simple shall be credited to railway construction accounts for each such railway district and shall be applied as follows:—1. Until authority shall be given by Parliament for the construction of a railway within any such railway district such moneys shall be paid into the consolidated revenue and when authority shall have been so given such amount as may then be standing to the credit of the railway construction account for that district shall be raised in such way as Parliament shall direct and be placed to the credit of the railway trust account for that railway district. 2. When the construction of a railway in any railway district has been authorised by Parliament all the moneys derived from the alienation of Crown lands in fee-simple within any railway construction reserves therein and (fifty) per centum of all moneys derived from the alienation of Crown lands in fee-simple within any other part of such railway district shall be applied in the first instance to the repayment of the moneys advanced by the Colonial Treasurer to the railway trust account for that district under the last preceding clause and when such advance shall have been repaid in full then to the construction of the railway authorised to be constructed in that railway district and when such railway shall have been completed then as provided in subsection 1. of clause 3 of this Act.

He might inform honorable members that, if this clause were carried, it would be necessary, on recommitting the Bill, to make some verbal amendments.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said the course which had been taken by the honorable member for Clermont in connection with this Bill was a very extraordinary one, because the amendments which he purposed introducing were not only so extensive, but in his own opinion, they were so inconsistent with the Bill as it stood, as to necessitate an entire re-writing of the Bill; and he had accompanied his amendments by a draft of the new Bill which it would be necessary to frame, in order to incorporate his amendments in it. It was an extraordinary proceeding that, in committee, after the principle of the Bill had been affirmed by a large majority of the House, an attempt should be made to destroy that Bill under the pretence of amending it. That these amendments would have that effect was shown by the honorable member himself, because he had found it necessary to bring in the new Bill they would make. Now, the Bill had been on the table of the House almost ever since the first day of meeting—at any rate, for about six weeks—and there had been plenty of time for the honorable member for Clermont to have prepared and introduced an alternative Bill before the second reading came on; and, if he had done so, it would then have been optional to honorable members to adopt which they thought best. But, instead of that, the second reading of the Bill had been allowed to pass; they had affirmed that the principle upon which the railway to Roma should be constructed was by sales of land along the line; and, what was more extraordinary, this new Bill did not dispute the expediency of that principle, and was not inconsistent with it. It did not say the railway ought not to be made from Dalby to Roma, and that it ought not to be paid for by sales of Crown lands. In point of fact, there was nothing in the printed amendments, or in the speech of the honorable member for Clermont, to show why the Government measure should not be allowed to pass as it stood; and if the honorable member were really desirous to make it applicable to the whole colony, he could bring in a separate Bill for that purpose. He believed he would be able to show that the honorable member's scheme was impolitic and inoperative, and he believed the only object in bringing it in at the present time was to try and get rid of the Government Bill altogether.

Mr. PALMER: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Government Bill provided for the construction of a railway from Dalby to Roma by means of sales of land, and the preamble in the new Bill stated, that "the cost of the same and all future railways should be defrayed by the sale of Crown lands." Now, that was a principle that House had not affirmed; it went beyond the principle affirmed by the

second reading of the Government Bill, which, as amended, and with the amendment that would be made in the preamble, simply affirmed the construction of the line from Dalby to Roma on that principle; but this provided that all future railways should be constructed out of Crown lands. Now, how could that operate with fairness to districts in which railways were not constructed? They had expended several millions of money for the construction of railways in the North and South, and those districts which had enjoyed the benefits arising from this, were asked by their representatives, not that they should refund the money, but that no other district in the colony was to be allowed to have a railway until the savings from the sales of land in that district were found sufficient to provide a railway for them. Now, he ventured to say, that although it was a good principle when land was saleable, and population was small, that railways should be paid for by sales of land, yet, he held that districts where there was a large population and where the land was not so saleable, or where it had already been alienated, were quite as much entitled to railway communication as country that was thinly populated. It must be remembered that the land revenue was only about one-tenth of the whole revenue, about seven-tenths being derived from taxation; and he could not see on what principles of justice they should affirm that the lucky few, where there was a large amount of land available for sale, and which would be readily bought, should have railways; but the district with large population, where the land was not saleable, or where it had already been sold, was to be denied any recompense in the shape of public works or railways from the amount they contributed to the Treasury. The honorable member for Clermont had spoken at some length, not only on the question that the third clause stand part of the Bill, but also on the general principles of the Bill. He did not intend to follow his example in that respect, because the Bill had been before the House and the country for some time, and they knew as much about it as they were likely to know; but he would call the attention of the committee to this fact: That, if these amendments were carried, the railway reserve proposed in the Bill for the construction of the line from Dalby to Roma would be done away with. That would be the effect if this clause were struck out, and the whole object of the Bill would be defeated. The promoters of these amendments very ostentatiously put forward their desire to push on the railway from Dalby to Roma, but honorable members must consider, that if this line were constructed, and the Government Bill was so mutilated that it could not be made by sales of land, it would have to be paid for out of the public exchequer. He noticed, in the twelfth clause of the new Bill, there was no limit whatever to the amount

of money that might be advanced for the purpose of constructing the railway from Dalby to Roma, and he thought that was very significant, because they had heard honorable members on the other side of the House, in the debate on the second reading, contend that it ought to be paid for out of loan. He would, therefore, caution honorable members, that if they voted for the amendment, and struck out the third clause limiting the reserve proposed to be created, and limiting the power the Government would have for the sale of land for the construction of the railway; they would certainly find in the end, that they would saddle their constituents with an additional amount of interest—the interest on the loan which would be required to construct the railway. The Bill introduced by the honorable member for Clermont introduced a principle which he thought extremely absurd. The other night the Government, at the request of many honorable members, consented to withdraw the words “Gulf of Carpentaria” from the preamble; and it was agreed that it was quite sufficient for the present to declare that the railway should go to Roma, where they had the means of paying for it; but, in the Bill introduced by the honorable member for Clermont, they were asked to do exactly the same thing in a different shape. They were asked to declare that railways should only be made in certain districts; the railway must not go out of the Southern district into the Central district, or anywhere else. They were asked to establish four railway districts within which railways were to be constructed, and these railways were to go to several ports; in fact, they were asked to point out on the map of Queensland where railways were to be made several years in advance. There was another feature in the matter. It appeared that they were to have a little of the log-rolling which was practised very successfully when the last Government were in office. At that time, he believed a party of Northern members, whose support was very necessary to the Ministry at that time, got nearly the whole of the public works in the Northern district as the price of their support, and now they found the Northern district was to include Bowen and Mackay, and to come down south as far as Maryborough.

MR. C. J. GRAHAM: No.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Rockhampton railway district, as defined in the new Bill, included Port Curtis, Leichhardt, South Kennedy, Mitchell, and Gregory North, districts—

MR. PALMER: You have not read the amendment itself.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was what appeared in the printed Bill, but their amendment was slightly different; but, even according to the amendment, the Central district went as far north as Port Denison and the head waters of the Thompson, and in the south it went to Maryborough, because it came down to the head waters of

the Dawson. They were told the railway from Brisbane should be taken due west; they were not to trench on the Northern district, and he could not understand why Maryborough should be treated as it was. He thought the scheme contained in the amendments of the honorable member for Clermont was one he would never have brought forward if he had intended to pass it. It was open to so many objections, that he could not conceive any honorable member bringing forward such a measure with any idea that the House would pass it. The only object, he thought, was to afford an opportunity of discussion—which, he dared say, would be extremely prolonged—and, if possible, to shelve the Bill introduced by the Government. He thought it would have been more open and more honest to have met the Bill with a decided negative, than to bring in an amendment, which, if carried, would only have the effect of upsetting the principle of the Bill, and rendering it completely inoperative; and, at the same time, it would enable honorable members opposite to go away, and say they were still in favor of the Bill they had assisted to defeat.

MR. AMHURST said they had all agreed that a railway should be made from Dalby to Roma, and that it should be made by sales of Crown lands, and, no doubt, that was a very good principle. He thought the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont was of the greatest importance, and he quite agreed with that honorable member, that a portion of the money which was paid yearly from the Northern and other districts, where there were no railways, and where there would be none for some time, should go into the consolidated revenue, and there remain and be available for the purposes of constructing railways in those districts when required. It was a step towards financial separation, which he thought was one of the finest principles that could be adopted; and no doubt the more public works were carried out, the greater would be the amount of settlement that would take place. The honorable the Minister for Works complained that these divisions, proposed by the honorable member for Clermont, would have the effect of confining railways to certain districts, and they would not be able to pass from one district to another and join together; but he saw nothing in them to lead to such a conclusion, because the intention was, that each district should bear the cost of the railway passing through it. He also believed the passing of the amendments, instead of encouraging log-rolling, would have the effect of putting a stop to it.

MR. C. J. GRAHAM said the remarks of the honorable the Minister for Works had materially strengthened his (Mr. Graham's) position with regard to the amendment. In the first place, that honorable gentleman said it was an extraordinary thing to bring in amendments of this kind when the Bill had been

before the House so long; but he would point out that, as soon as the Government struck out "Gulf of Carpentaria," and materially altered the scope of the Bill, he set to work to draft his amendments, and he had brought them before the House at the earliest possible moment. The honorable gentleman also said, that if the Bill were amended as he (Mr. Graham) proposed, they would proclaim railway reserves all over the colony; but there was nothing of the sort in the Bill. It simply provided that as soon as it was desired to make a railway in any part of the country, a railway reserve should be proclaimed by that House—that as soon as a railway was determined upon, the House should, by resolution, declare that a railway reserve should be established. Then again, the honorable member stated there were some districts where there was a large population and where there was no land for sale, and he (Mr. Graham) presumed he meant mining districts; but his amendment provided for such cases exactly. In such a case it would be absolutely necessary that the railway should be paid for by loan, and not by the sales of Crown lands; but, if at any future time the lands assumed a value and they were sold, the proceeds would go in repayment of the money expended on the railway. There was nothing whatever in the amendment to prevent railways running from one district into another. It simply provided for the establishment of railway districts, and as soon as a line crossed the boundary and went into another district, that district would become responsible for the portion constructed in it. His private opinion was, that the best lines of railway they could have would be from the chief seaports into the interior, and there was nothing in his Bill—if Parliament should think proper to make railways starting in the South and running through the intermediate districts to the North—there was nothing to prevent it, and each district would become chargeable with the amount of railway in that district. He thought the fact of the honorable member taking notice of the slight mistake in the draft Bill, with reference to the districts embraced by the Central railway reserve, instead of looking at the amendment where the division—which did not include Bowen, or Mackay, or the country known as the Northern district as opposed to the Central district—was clearly laid down, showed the weakness of his cause; and no doubt, that would lead honorable members to read the amendment for themselves, and not be led away by anything that honorable member said.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL thought some honorable members did not entirely understand the effect of the amendments, and he desired to point out what their effect was, as far as they had any. The Government Bill proposed to raise money for the construction of the railway by the sale of lands, and the honorable member proposed to make the railway first and sell the land afterwards.

Now, he would like to know how that was to be done. There were two things to be done:—The railway was to be made, but it was not to be made until the land was sold; and no land was to be sold until the railway was made—so that the effect, as far as there was any effect, was to stop the railway from being constructed. He gave the honorable member credit for not intending anything so absurd; but still, that was the effect of the amendments. He had given considerable attention to them, and gave the honorable member credit for endeavoring to make the Bill a good Bill; but he could not reconcile these two things. Another point in the amendments to which he would call attention, was, that they were to have a new tenure given to lessees in the unsettled districts; that was something new, and the honorable member for Clermont said nothing about it. He understood that the pastoral tenants under the Act of 1869 were perfectly satisfied with their position, and he did not know, until the honorable member came forward with these amendments, that they wanted anything. Instead of the whole of the runs through which the line would pass being made available for the purposes of its construction, only half was to be taken, and the remainder was to be given to the present occupant under a new lease, with this material difference in the tenure, that, instead of being resumed by notice, which was subject to be dissented from by Parliament, they should retain it unless both House concurred in the resumption.

HONORABLE MEMBERS on the Opposition benches: No, no; read it again.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He found he had made a mistake; and his misapprehension had occurred through the confusion that had arisen from there being two drafts of the honorable member's amendments in different forms. The House had agreed that a particular line of railway should be constructed on the principle of providing the necessary funds by the sale of lands, and it seemed strange to him that amendments should be drafted and introduced which were or were not to have any effect. If they were to have any effect, they had nothing to do with the Western Railway Bill, and if they had no effect, what was the use of introducing them? They initiated a general principle, which could not be applied to the Bill, and he had no doubt if the Chairman were pressed for a ruling, he would rule that they were out of order, because they applied to the colony generally, and the Bill dealt with a particular line. He could point out by figures, also, that under this system the parts of the colony which most required railways would never be able to get them. He believed that if the principle were applied to the Wide Bay and Burnett, at the end of perhaps ten years they might have £100,000 to their credit, which would be available for railways. After about ten years, that would be the effect. The only

advantage claimed for the amendment was, that railways should not be constructed except out of the proceeds of land, and if the honorable member would agree either that it was or was not intended to construct railways out of the proceeds of sales of land, it would be more easy to argue. But one honorable member said it was and another that it was not, and the same honorable member changed his opinion every minute, so that it was very hard to answer such arguments. He had pointed out the true construction of the amendments, but what their effect would be on the construction of the railway to Roma, was beyond the power of anyone to find out.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he must give the honorable member for Clermont credit for endeavoring to meet the necessities of the case before the House, and he did not believe that any desire to get rid of the Bill existed in his mind. Neither was he justified in supposing such a desire existed in the mind of the honorable member at the head of the Opposition, for he saw, with pleasure, the notice of motion he had given, to the effect that the workmen now employed on the Brisbane and Ipswich line should, as soon as there was no further employment for them here, be employed on the extension from Dalby to Roma. He thought the amendments were in some respects an improvement, and that they went, to a great extent, in substituting a new Bill. He did not deny the right of the honorable member to submit them to the House, but he submitted that, if the honorable member was prepared to carry them into effect, he must not only reconsider the policy of the Bill itself, but the whole financial position of the colony at the present time. He must be prepared to substitute a Government of his own for the Government which was now in power; and it seemed to him (Mr. Douglas) that the amendments, really did imply a fundamental change in the financial position of the country. He was not now saying that there were not some matters in this Bill which he should like to see carried into effect, and he believed they would see some of them carried into effect. For instance, there was the principle already recognised in the Bill of the Government, of allocating land as a sinking fund, to liquidate the debt that would, no doubt, be now further amplified. He saw that that principle had been lately adopted in Victoria, where he understood that a certain portion of the revenue was yearly allocated for this purpose, and went to a fund which was eventually devoted to railway construction. This Bill provided that the railway should go to Roma, and perhaps further westward; and it also raised in his mind the question as to how the principle was eventually to be applied to other districts, because, unless it could fairly be applied to other districts, it was a matter for him to consider whether he was pledged to support the Bill at all. If

the principle admitted in this case was not to be admitted in others, he must say he might feel bound to oppose it. He was not prepared to support the amendment at the present time. He might say he felt satisfied that, if the inhabitants of the district he was now connected with—the Wide Bay and Burnett district—could only secure the land available in that district, they would be securing a very handsome endowment for the purpose of carrying out, not only their railways, but he would say, still further, that the principle of the honorable member for Clermont ought not to stop at railways, because, if it were found good for the purposes of railways, then it was good for all other purposes of public works. The honorable member for Clermont had given great attention to the subject, and on that ground alone, if on no other, his observations were deserving of attention. He laid some stress upon the difference between his proposed Bill and that which was under consideration, especially with reference to the point that he desired that the land sales should be held after the construction of the railway, not that they should precede the work. Now, he (Mr. Douglas) was far from supposing that it was the intention of the Government to sacrifice the lands. He presumed it was generally admitted that if the railway was to be made to Roma, there were lands which could be judiciously sold, and which would find an immediate market; there was no reason why the land around Dalby should not be sold at as early a period as possible, to furnish a sum to go on with the railway. There could be no doubt that judicious care and caution would be exercised by the Government; and, on that ground, there need be no fear if the House carried the Bill. With regard to halving the runs, he should be sorry to give his adherence to that provision, chiefly on account of the experience the country had. Under the Act of 1868, the halving of the runs in the settled districts had not been conducted in a manner to conduce to the advantage of the colony. The rights of the run-holders were saved under the Government Bill. It had been urged rightly that the Bill was to apply only to the Roma Railway. He looked with some anxiety for a similar measure which he anticipated would be proposed by the Government for the Wide Bay and Burnett district. The Government had recognised that district by a small provision on their Loan Estimate. It was not enough; but he should be happy if it was extended on the same terms as those on which the Roma Railway was to be made—an advance of £250,000 at once and a handsome endowment of land. His only difference with the Government was, that he believed the sum on the Loan Estimate for Wide Bay and Burnett Railway was not enough. If the principle that applied to the Western Railway was good, why not apply it to Wide Bay and Burnett for the purpose

contemplated? He was in the House to assert, that in that district there was ample land for that purpose; and he stated emphatically that there would be no difficulty whatever in resuming 500,000 acres for sale, as in the Western district. And to do that would be only fair. Reference had been made to log-rolling. When a railway was under consideration, there was a great deal to justify log-rolling, with all its objections. The different districts of the colony were all interested in the expenditure of public money: it was their life-blood. If public money raised by loan was spent in one district, that district was handicapped; capital was invited to that district, and enterprise and industry advanced. That expenditure in one district subtracted from other districts. Railways had heretofore been entered upon as speculations; the calculation of what they would pay in the future was advanced in favor of their construction. The interests of other districts must be considered in the same way as the interests of the Southern district and of the Rockhampton district were considered when the existing railways were entered upon. His district was now as important as was Rockhampton when the Great Northern Railway was started. He did not impugn the policy of the Government; but he said it contained no justification for the railway westward, as a speculation, that should not be applied alike to all districts of the colony. In New South Wales, three lines were carried on simultaneously. Many persons thought that one might have been more advantageously carried out to completion; and perhaps it would have been, for Sydney and Melbourne. But the Western and the Northern districts came forward with their claims, and they had their railways as well as the Southern districts. A great deal could be said in favor of such a policy, whatever the exceptions that might be urged against it. He took this opportunity to express a hope, that, as the Government had committed themselves to the policy of the Western Railway, a similar policy would be applied to districts that were to be similarly affected. If he was supported by honorable members who represented those districts, he should feel it his duty, most certainly, when the Loan Bill came under consideration, to oppose grants of money for one district unless something like an equivalent provision was made for the others. He did not presume, as a supporter of the Ministry, to interfere with their policy; but his feeling was, that it would have been wiser for them to have taken mature counsel as to what was required in a railway policy as applied to the districts of the colony generally. He should not be afraid of a larger loan; but he should couple it with the condition that it should be spread over a number of years. He was convinced of the necessity for the union of immigration and railway works, going on at the same time; but, as the House knew his opinions on the subject, he should

not repeat them. His project would be much larger than the Government one: it would contemplate the extension of three main railways—the Southern and Western, the Northern, and what he claimed as the Central, for the district of Wide Bay and Burnett.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: And Stanthorpe.

MR. DOUGLAS: To go into the market for the loan the Government proposed, he would rather not. It was insufficient; and the raising of it would interfere with the Government and probably preclude them from going into the market again for a few years. He should have been glad to have been called upon to support a mature policy; but as it was, the Government had done what they thought wisest and best. In his opinion, it was insufficient, and he hoped that they would consider the necessity of placing the claims of Wide Bay and Burnett upon a more practical footing than at present.

MR. DE SATGE said the honorable member for Maryborough had certainly given his consent to a great portion of the arguments of the honorable member for Clermont, in support of the amendments proposed in the Bill. Neither the Minister for Works nor the Attorney-General had answered those arguments; they had not recognised the broader meaning, the larger issue, contained in the amendments beyond the Bill of the Government. In all business transactions, persons required to get an article before they paid for it. By the Bill as it stood, the leaseholders beyond Roma were asked to destroy their securities at once; before they got the slightest benefit from the railway, they were asked to pay for the article. The Government admitted the principle of constructing the railway by loan, while, at the same time, they demanded to sell the land before commencing it. They were to get an advance of a quarter of a million sterling to commence with. Why not carry the principle of loan further? The Minister for Works had laid great stress upon the circumstance that the House were committed to the principle of the Bill by having consented to the second reading. Honorable members of the Opposition voted for the second reading because they would not, on principle, go against the Roma Railway; but that did not pledge them against any alterations that might be made in the Bill in committee. The Opposition did not vote for the railway to Carpentaria. The honorable member for Maranoa did not vote for it, though he voted for the second reading of the Bill. The Opposition were not pledged in any form beyond the principle of carrying a railway to Roma, and paying for it in land, at some future time. They would not go against the land fifty miles beyond Roma, the land all round that terminus being included in the railway reserve; but the Minister for Works wanted an unreasonable extension of the reserve, which would disturb the leaseholders unnecessarily before the railway should be begun. As the crow flew, the

distance from Brisbane to Tambo was about 430 to 450 miles; from Rockhampton to Tambo, about 280 miles. The House were asked to draw the produce of that district and the other inland districts a distance of 160 miles out of the way, to benefit Brisbane, when the legitimate course of traffic would take it to Rockhampton, its natural port. The amendments of the honorable member for Clermont would leave the lands of the colony under the Acts of 1868 and 1869, which everyone admitted worked well; they did not in the least attempt to improve the security of the leaseholders, who would have no better claim upon the mercy of Parliament, if those amendments were passed, than they had under the existing law. One-half of the runs would surely pay for the railway; if not, let the Government take the whole. But there was no need to displace any security until the railway was built, when the value of the lands would be enhanced, and a higher return obtained from their sale to pay for the works than could be secured now. It was a pity that the Bill was not in charge of some honorable member who had not an *animus* against the western settlers as the Minister for Works had. The Government had a majority; and they would vote against the just principle proposed in the amendments. That was not argument. There was an indecent haste exhibited to pass the Bill through committee; and no measure ever came before Parliament that more required deliberate consideration.

Mr. PECHEY observed, that both the honorable member for Clermont and the honorable member for Maryborough might consider themselves placed in a high position by the remarks that had been addressed to the committee since they spoke. It was told that even the writer of the first Book of the Pentateuch had a commentator, and that that commentator interpolated. The speeches of the honorable gentlemen named had been commented on and interpolated, but whether the interpolations were an improvement on the original text it was not for him to say. Still, at the same time, a great deal more was made out of those two speeches than was intended by the honorable members who delivered them. It was certain that those honorable members would vote on different sides of the House. With reference to the distance between the different ports on the coast and the inland point of connection with the railway, he had to make a remark. He should be very sorry to accuse an honorable member of stating what was contrary to the truth; but an honorable member might adorn a statement for his own side in such a way as to be believed, even though it was not in accordance with facts. The honorable member for Normanby had told the House that the distance from Rockhampton to Tambo was considerably less than from Brisbane to Tambo, and that the intention of the Bill was to secure the traffic that belonged to the

shorter line for the longer line. What were the facts? The *desideratum* of the honorable member for Clermont and other northern members, was the extension of the Great Northern Railway to Clermont; that was their present *ultima thule*, the point of glory that they sought. He should not take into consideration that little bit of a cattle track a few miles out of Rockhampton, but the only railway that existed in the colony, from Brisbane to Dalby, which it was now proposed to extend to Roma and onward to a position on the Ward River; and he stated, in answer to the figures quoted by the honorable member for Normanby, that Lansdowne Station was much nearer to Tambo—the distance was insignificant, 40 miles—than Clermont was; from Clermont to Tambo being something like 150 miles. The honorable member for Clermont must be aware that there was not the slightest chance of his carrying his resolutions against the Government Bill, and making his gridirons all over the country; as, if his amendments were ever so favorably received, they could not be given practical effect to. Why did not the honorable member for Clermont support the carrying of the Great Northern Railway due west from Rockhampton? No; he wished to extend it north-westerly; in the same direction that the Government railway would go. If honorable members examined the map, they would find that the lines were parallel. The Government wished to make a railway which would be of national importance. The amendments showed that the honorable member who moved them wished to make Rockhampton the capital of the colony, to draw all the traffic of the interior through Clermont to that port. Whether that would be useful, or be any permanent support to Rockhampton, he (Mr. Pechey) could not say. But let all honorable members clearly understand what the amendments meant.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the geography of the honorable member for Aubigny wanted setting right. If he had only looked at the map in his hand, he would never have supposed that the honorable member for Clermont proposed to bring the traffic of the interior through Clermont to Rockhampton. All that was proposed was in protest of the attempt of the Government to tap, say, the Mitchell district for the benefit of Brisbane. The honorable member for Aubigny was lamentably wrong in his remarks as in his geography; but there was no fear that any intelligent member of the House would be misled by him. If he had consulted the Minister for Works, or even the newly-fledged Minister for Lands, with his great dissecting power, he would not have been so grossly in error. He had made statements that were utterly untrue.

Mr. PECHEY: Order.

Mr. PALMER said he thought the committee were wandering a great deal from the purpose of the Bill, and he should endeavor,

in the few remarks he had to make, to bring them back to it. He might commence by stating at once that, the Secretary for Works to the contrary notwithstanding, there was no desire whatever on the part of the Opposition to throw out the Government Bill entirely. They wanted to amend it, simply. He had declared to the House, with almost every honorable member who had spoken on his side, that they had no objection to carrying a railway as far as Roma. If honorable members on the Ministerial side of the House would bear that in mind, it would save a great deal of time in the discussion: they might keep the railway to the Gulf of Carpentaria entirely out of sight. The Opposition wished, as they had stated, to assist the Government in making a railway to Roma, and to commence that line at once. If they differed in the method in which that line was to be carried out, he presumed that they would be allowed to advance their reasons for so doing. The honorable member for Clermont had very clearly put forward wherein the Opposition differed from the Government. After all, the difference was very small. He might, he thought, quote the language of the Colonial Secretary, and say it was a shadow. The Government wished to make the railway to Roma, starting with an advance of £250,000, and to get the rest of the capital to carry out the work from the sale of land, before the railway should be completed. The Opposition differed in this way:—They said to the Government, take the advance. They agreed thus far. Take that from loan; but do not go and sacrifice the land until the railway is in existence. That was really the whole difference between the Government and the Opposition. To say that his side of the House put any factious opposition in the way of the Government making the Roma Railway, could not be maintained for a moment. That they were acting *bonâ fide* was shown in schedule A of the amendments brought forward by the honorable member for Clermont. They went even further than the Government. In the Government plan, it was proposed to take fifty miles on each side of the railway, from Dalby to Roma. The Opposition went fifty miles beyond Roma:—

*“Definition of Southern Railway Reserve.—*For the purpose of defining the limits of the Southern Railway reserve created under this Act a straight line shall be drawn from Dalby to the town of Roma and another from Roma to a point fifty miles due west by compass from the town of Roma and these straight lines shall be the base lines of the said reserve which shall extend for fifty miles on each side of the said base lines.”

The Opposition proposed to sell the land as each section of the line was finished and opened for traffic; not before the railway was commenced. Now, that was bringing down the difference between the two sides of the House to the narrowest limits, as regarded the Roma Railway. The Opposition

went further than the Government in proposing to make the measure for the construction of railways out of the land a general one, to apply to the whole colony as well as to the carrying out of the Roma Railway. That was a question beside the other. But the main difference was what he had stated. The Government wanted to sell the land first and to make the railway afterwards; the Opposition wanted to make the railway first and to sell the land afterwards. He put it to the committee to consider the serious mistakes that had been made heretofore in the carrying out of a railway policy. It must be patent to everyone who had been any time a member of the House, or who had reasoning faculties, that the country had made a great mistake in selling the land on the Downs before the Southern and Western Railway was made. There could be no doubt that if the policy now proposed had been pursued, the proceeds of the sales of land would have been quadrupled, and would have been sufficient to have recouped the cost of the railway to the country. Were the House to pursue the same bad principle that had proved a failure in the past? Were they going to allow parties to buy land at 10s. an acre, which, when the railway was made, could be easily sold at 40s.? The Bill of the Government was a Bill for the capitalist. The Opposition wished to put money into the Treasury for the good of the inhabitants of the country; and the Government Bill was one for putting the difference of price into the pockets of the capitalist. That was the great difference between the two sides of the House. If the Opposition should be beaten, that would not prevent them from assisting the Government in going on with the railway to Roma. The Opposition maintained the sound political principle on which the railway should be constructed. There would be a division upon the question. If the Opposition should succeed, the Government would find that they had made a considerable improvement on their measure. There had been a great many objections made to the amendments. He should not follow them. He had heard the Attorney-General with some astonishment; and he could not believe that the honorable and learned gentleman ever read the amendments, as they were not capable of the construction put upon them by him. How the Attorney-General arrived at the conclusion that he put before the House, it was perfectly impossible for anyone else to say. The first sub-division of the first clause of the amendments was as follows:—

“Until authority shall be given by Parliament for the construction of a railway within any such railway district such moneys shall be paid into the consolidated revenue and when authority shall have been so given such amount as may then be standing to the credit of the railway construction account for that district shall be raised in such way as Parliament shall direct and be

placed to the credit of the railway trust account for that railway district."

The honorable and learned gentleman argued that the second sub-division contradicted the first sub-division; but he would admit, upon reflection, that he had made a mistake. If he had looked further to the amendment on clause 15 of the Bill he would have found no difficulty in discovering that provision was made for constructing a railway in any part of the colony, even in a district where land had not been sold—

"It shall be lawful for the Colonial Treasurer under the warrant of the Governor to pay and advance from time to time out of the moneys standing to the credit of the public account such sums of money as shall have been voted by Parliament for the construction of a railway in any railway district to be placed to the credit of the railway trust account for that railway district."

It was provided that where land was sold a proportion of the proceeds should be placed to the credit of the railway trust account.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: What about the fifty per cent.?

MR. PALMER: That was an independent proposition altogether. He might say, that "fifty per cent." was not meant to be printed; it was meant to be left blank. There was a difference of opinion whether it should be twenty-five or fifty per cent., but, assuming it to be fifty per cent., that amount was meant to be taken from the general sales of public land—not from land in the railway reserves, but in the railway districts, outside the railway reserve. He would show how they meant to apply that. He presumed that no honorable member would think that one main trunk line throughout the southern division of the colony would be sufficient for all time. There must be branches to feed that, and independent lines; and in any particular district, fifty per cent. of the land sold in the railway district would go for the purpose of making those lines. It would go to the credit of the fund for that purpose; and one remark made by an honorable member on the other side, which seemed rather to amuse the committee was, "to be used of course," and he (Mr. Palmer) said "yes; to be used of course." If the amount of money went to the credit of the consolidated fund, was it to lie idle? When it was proposed that a railway was to be made in a district, the money was to be raised in such manner as the House directed. They did not mean the money to lie idle; it was "to be used of course." He had heard really no argument against the amendment. It was argued, the other evening, when the question was under discussion, that the amendment would be much better in a Land Bill; but it was hardly worth while splitting straws over that, because the Bill introduced by the Government was as much, or rather more, a Land Bill than anything else, so

that that argument went for very little. He believed this was the proper time to introduce some clauses of this sort, and show that they meant not to legislate, as had been too much the practice, for the Southern district of the colony alone, but that they wanted to make it a general measure for the advantage of all; that they would do as much for the Wide Bay and Burnett and Central and Northern division as, at least, to put by a nest-egg for them until they were in a position to ask for railway construction. Some of them were in that position. He had no doubt the Wide Bay and Burnett district was fully entitled to ask for a railway now, and there was nothing in the amendment which said a railway should not be made in any district until a fund was laid by from land sales. On the contrary, they asserted quite the reverse;—that the money should be advanced from the general revenue for the construction of the line, and be refunded by the sales of land in those districts. The great difference between the Bill and the amendments was, that the Government wanted to sell the land and make the railway, and the supporters of the amendments wanted to make the railway and then sell the land. That was the gist of the argument, and he should look with utter contempt upon any assertion that honorable members on that side of the House wished to obstruct the Government in making the railway to Roma. If the Opposition could not make it their way, let the Government make it theirs; they contended for it in their way, because they believed it would be the best for the country.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER said, the honorable member for Port Curtis, in pointing out the difference between the Government Bill and the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont, forgot the fact that the Government proposed to borrow £250,000 to start the railway with. They would have to give notice to the persons whose interests would be affected by the resumption, and that notice would have to remain on the table of both Houses of Parliament for sixty days; so that, under any circumstances, no land could be sold for about fifteen or eighteen months; and, as the plans were ready, there was no reason why they should not construct forty or fifty miles of the line before an inch of the line could possibly be sold. That, it would appear from the remarks that had been made, was the only difference between the proposal of the Government and that of the honorable member for Clermont; and he did not think it was worth while preparing an entirely new Bill, simply for the sake of a distinction without a difference. But he considered there were essential and important differences between the two proposals, and he thought a principle of the kind introduced by the honorable member for Clermont should have been advocated as a measure standing by itself, and should not be introduced in con-

nection with Land Bills, Railway Bills, or anything else. It was a financial question which should be dealt with separately. If a certain portion of the land revenue was to be allocated for the purpose of railway construction, he should like to know what difference there was between land revenue and revenue derived from other sources; and why should railways be particularly singled out to be constructed on that principle? He understood that a great deal might be said about allocating certain portions of revenue to the district where it was raised, and that it should be devoted to public works generally; but there was no reason why it should be put to railways only, or the formation of railway trust funds. The honorable member for Maryborough appeared anxious to go in for a bolder policy, and borrow some millions of money for these purposes, and the honorable member for Mulgrave was of the same opinion; and no one would have been more pleased than himself to have gone in for a large loan for all purposes of this kind, if the colony had been in a position to do so. But they had to listen to the voice of prudence, and he thought the finances of the colony were not in such a condition to justify them in doing so. He considered a million and a half was quite as much as they were justified in borrowing at the present time. By the first of these sub-sections, it was provided that, until railways were authorised, one-half the proceeds of land sales should be placed to the credit of a special railway account; and, as the honorable member for Port Curtis said, the money was not to be hoarded up, but used as current revenue. So soon as a railway was authorised, a railway reserve was to be created; and the whole of the proceeds of sales of land in that reserve were to be placed to the credit of a trust account, and fifty per cent. of lands sold in the railway district—not the railway reserve—were also to be placed to that account. According to this scheme, supposing the Bill now under discussion to be carried, the Treasurer was to make an advance of a quarter of a million, and immediately the work was commenced, fifty per cent. from the sales of land—not in the railway reserve, but in the Southern railway district—was to be devoted to the repayment of that loan, and the construction of the line; and he would point out, that that would have a very injurious effect upon the finances of the colony. From the return he held in his hand, it appeared the revenue derived from the alienation of Crown lands in the proposed Southern railway district during last year was £148,000, one-half of which, according to the new clause proposed by the honorable member for Clermont, would be devoted to the repayment of the advance from the Treasury. The revenue would therefore be £74,000 deficient, and if the country required that amount, resort must be had to additional taxation, and that as they all knew, would take the form of increased customs duties, and it

would have to be borne, not by the Southern railway district, but by the colony generally. The honorable member for Port Curtis wished to persuade the committee that the only difference between the proposal of the Government and that of the honorable member for Clermont was a question as to the time when the lands should be sold; but there was another very important difference. The proposal of the Government was, that a specified limited area should be selected, and that the proceeds of the sales of land within that area should go to the fund for the construction of the railway; but they did not propose to go to even other districts in the same portion of the colony—to Stanthorpe, or the Logan, or other places—and ask them to advance one-half their land revenue to construct the railway to Roma. They said, if a railway was required to Roma, let them take as small an area as they could, so as not to interfere with vested interests more than was absolutely necessary; and not go meandering all over the district to raise funds for the construction of a line in which other portions of that district had small, if any, interest. There was no object in laying down the principle, or else the principle was dangerous, because it called upon the whole colony to make up the revenue practically lost by the transfer of the land revenue in one particular district to a special account. Taking the different districts, and leaving out the hundreds, taking only thousands, the quantity of land sold in the Southern district since Separation was £1,709,000; the Wide Bay and Burnett, £144,000; Central, £227,000; and the Northern district, £126,000. Now, if they took the last year, 1874, they would find, taking fifty per cent. of the land revenue, there would be only £74,000 available for railway purposes in the Southern division; £16,000 only in the Wide Bay and Burnett; £18,000 in the Central; and £9,000 in the Northern division. Taking the average, there would be about £56,000 a-year available for those purposes in the Southern division; only £5,000 in the Wide Bay and Burnett; £7,500 in the Central; and £4,000 in the Northern division. What earthly object, he would ask, could be obtained by placing these amounts to the railway district account? They would not affect railway construction in the slightest degree, because railways would be made as soon as the country could afford it, and they would be of benefit to the colony at large. He hoped the committee would see its way to dispense with the amendments, because he believed they contained dangerous principles, and the more they were looked into, with the less favor would they be considered.

Mr. WALSH said the discussion was somewhat irregular, because they were discussing the whole of the Bill under a particular clause; and, in order to bring it into its regular course, and that he himself might be in order,

he would move, that the Chairman do leave the chair. In doing so, he had no intention of embarrassing the Government in any way with respect to the Bill, but his object was merely as he had stated. Now, he thought it his duty, as the representative of a very important district, to give his opinion on this very important subject; and, in doing so, he would not go into details, but endeavor to confine himself to the general issues, as far as they related to his own district in particular, and the colony in general. The great objection he had to this Bill was, that the Government had introduced quite a new doctrine as to the way in which railways were to be made, or the means of payment from which they were to be made; and the alteration, he thought, came very late in the day. If the lands of the colony were to be used now for the construction of railways, on the plea that the railways would benefit the districts through which they permeated, he thought some exaction should be made from those districts which had been blessed with railways for some years, and which had not contributed specially towards the cost of making them. He thought the Government scheme should be general, to be just to his constituents and those portions of the colony which were about to give up land for the purpose of making the line. If they decided that the land through which railways passed should bear the cost of those railways, they should provide that those districts through which railways had already been made should be adequately taxed, to relieve the general pressure which the cost of those railways had upon the finances and the people of this colony. He held it was unfair to the outside districts to say they were going to make railways towards them, but they must make their land and their inhabitants pay for them. It was unfair to do that, while they made no provision for relieving the inhabitants of those districts, who so calmly, so placidly, and so quietly had been contributing to the taxation necessitated by the railways already in the colony, of the burdens thus imposed upon them. He must protest in the name of his constituents against this new idea being adopted, until something like justice was done, and they were relieved from the taxation they were now laboring under from the cost of the present railways. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer said he could not see why railways should be singled out to be paid for by the lands of the colony, and no more could he (Mr. Walsh) see it; and he quite agreed with that honorable gentleman that it was very late in the day to come forward with this startling idea. It used to be the cry, that the land was to pay for immigration, and what was to become of immigration if all the land was to be absorbed in railways? It appeared to him that the honorable the Colonial Treasurer forgot the nature of the preamble of the Bill when he said he could not see why

railways should be singled out to be paid for by land. The preamble said:—

“And whereas it is expedient that such railway should be forthwith constructed and that funds for the construction of the same should be provided by the sale of Crown lands.”

That was in direct contradiction of the statement of the honorable member.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He said that in reference to the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont.

Mr. WALSH: He quite agreed with the honorable member, but he could not, as an outsider, see any difference between the proposal of the Government and that of the honorable member for Clermont. The Government proposed that the land should pay for the railways in the future, and the honorable member for Clermont proposed the same thing in a detailed manner, and yet, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer got up and disavowed it. But the honorable member for Clermont was only following out the grand scheme of the Government; and there was an amount of inconsistency in connection with the matter, that he thought the honorable the Colonial Treasurer ought not to exhibit in that House. That honorable gentleman also said, if the scheme of the honorable member for Clermont were carried out, the funds of the colony would have to pay for it, and that was the objection he (Mr. Walsh) took to the scheme of the honorable the Minister for Works:—that it was not the lands of the colony that would be called upon to pay for this railway from Dalby to Roma, but the funds of the colony. He said, as an old colonist, and one who, he supposed, would be allowed to have some opinion on the subject, that he was perfectly sure that, within the time of the making of this railway, it would be utterly impossible to sell sufficient land to defray the cost of its construction. He also agreed with the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, that the effect of rushing into this railway, as they now seemed inclined to do, under the pretence that they would be able to sell the land and defray the cost of it, would be increased taxation, not only in customs duties, but probably more direct taxation. There was one thing appeared to him, and he knew it did to his constituents, as very strange, and that was, that while they were threatened by this measure with having to defray the whole cost of these lines, other colonists, who would derived greater benefit from them, were not to be called upon to pay at all. There were certain leaseholders in possession of Crown property on each side of the line, who were to be called upon to give up their holdings, which would probably involve the ruin of these men, for the construction of a line, which would not benefit them at all, while persons outside the proposed area, who were

living in towns, and would get far greater advantages, were not called upon to pay anything. Could not they make the railways without bringing certain ruin or serious injury on a certain portion of their fellow-colonists? If railways were a burden or a blessing, why should not the whole colony share it? Why single out certain persons, and worry and disturb them by a Bill of this kind, which he was sure would not be sufficient to carry out the railway, and which would probably put those individuals into the Insolvent Court? Another difficulty which struck him was this:—The Government proposed to reserve 64,000 acres for every mile of railway; they said the minimum price was to be ten shillings per acre, and at the same time they told the House the cost of the railway would be something like £3,000 or £4,000 a-mile; and yet they proposed to worry and annoy the present holders by selling land to the extent of £32,000 per mile. If the line would not cost more than £3,000 or £4,000 a mile, they were proposing a greater destruction of existing interests than there was any necessity for. He thought the Bill was calculated to do a great deal of harm. He was sure it would not bring much to the revenue for the purpose of defraying the cost of the proposed line, and he thought it would be far better for the Government, who had already made such extraordinary alterations in it, and who must continue to make them all through the Bill, to withdraw it. He was sure the House would consent to the construction of the railway from Dalby to Roma in the usual way, by asking for the money for that purpose. He believed the very idea of a Bill of this kind becoming a burden on the colony would spread that amount of dismay and distrust that it would injure existing interests, and prevent the future prosperity of the colony to a very great extent—to an extent which the honorable members who had charge of it had no idea of. He could say a great deal more, but he felt that he had said all he need say at that moment; but he must protest, on behalf of his constituents, against a Bill which introduced a new element such as was now proposed, which he believed would do so much to do them and their property a great deal of injury, without carrying any corresponding or adequate benefit. He could not see why one portion of the colony should be treated differently from another in the construction of their public works, or in the expenditure of loan or of other public money. And, before he sat down, he could not help protesting, on behalf of a district in which he had great interest, against the miserable railway which was promised to the Gympie and Maryborough people, at the cost of the colony. He did not see, if the Maryborough and Gympie people were entitled to a railway, why they should not have a railway equally as good and equally

as useful as those now in existence or promised in this Bill. He moved—

That the Chairman do now leave the chair.

Mr. HODGKINSON thought that not one of the arguments of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had been replied to, and that, if the amendment of the honorable member for Clermont were carried out, not only would the amount of money required for the construction of the railway be indefinite, but the sale of the land would be so hampered by the intense desire to preserve what the Opposition called their property, that they would have a further series of extensive loans, and the northern districts, which were becoming most important in wealth and popularity, would have to pay for works from which they derived no advantage. As the honorable the Colonial Treasurer had pointed out, any attempt to acquire a useful sum for railway purposes in the North by setting apart portion of the proceeds of the sales of lands was impracticable, because there was no demand for land there to any great extent, nor was there any desire to interfere with the pastoral tenure in those districts. If the demand for land in the South were sufficient to produce a fund which would warrant the Government in proceeding with the construction of these works, they were justified in doing so; but he was satisfied that if the system advocated by the honorable member for Clermont were carried, it must result in a deficiency of revenue and consequent increased taxation, of which the North must bear its share; and their patience was already so tried that it would take very little to make them insist upon total separation from the colony. That cry had been silent during last session and the present session, because it was believed the present Government would do the North some justice. The principle of making the land pay for railways should have been adopted long ago, and it was because the Government were endeavoring to carry out that system that he gave them his support. If they did not carry it out they would provoke the unfailing obstinacy of the North; and once they united, with their rapidly increasing population, and demanded separation, it could not in justice be refused, and it would be useless to do so. He thought the Bill introduced by the Government was deprived, so far as the North was concerned, of its most attractive feature. He should have preferred that they had adhered to the original idea, not perhaps to the Continental Railway, but that they should have held out that at some not very distant day there was a probability, or a possibility, of constructing a main trunk line in the North which would supply permanent and more rapid means of communication than they at present possessed. He was certain that, no matter what form might be adopted by the Government in the construction of this

railway, anything that interfered in the slightest degree with the pastoral tenants would provoke the strongest opposition from the other side of the House; but he should have thought that, even at the sacrifice of a considerable portion of their runs, the railway could not possibly injure the pastoral tenants. It would place them in a much better position, even though they parted with portions of of their runs, because there would be a great reduction in the cost of carriage both of produce and articles of consumption. He should give the Bill, in its original form, so far as regarded the introduction of these amendments, his support; and he hoped every member of outside constituencies would see, under these amendments, a most insidious attempt to obstruct railway construction altogether, and, if possible, to saddle the whole colony with a debt for the advantage of one portion of it.

Question.—That the Chairman do now leave the chair—put and negatived.

Mr. McILWRAITH said there was some considerable force in the arguments of the honorable the Minister for Works to-night, against the amendments of the honorable member for Clermont. He put it in two ways—one being that on the night of the second reading the majority affirmed the principle of the Bill, which principle the amendments ignored; and the other was, that it looked as if they were trying to bring in a scheme to take the place of the Bill altogether. He thought, however, that if they considered the position to which the grand Continental Railway Bill had come down—first to the Western Railway Bill, and now they were told, for the first time, by the honorable the Minister for Works, it was to be the Roma Railway Bill—they would see that the honorable member for Clermont had done nothing that was not quite pardonable under the circumstances. They could do nothing but endeavor to draft the best Bill they could on the Bill of the Government; and he thought the honorable member for Clermont had done well in bringing in a large railway policy. He contended that it had been clearly shown that the most beneficial plan for the construction of railways was to construct the railway first and sell the land afterwards. The whole arguments of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer and the Secretary for Works, were to the effect that this £250,000 was a temporary loan. If they could get hold of the land now they would proceed to sell it at once, but, being unable to do so, they borrowed this money which would be reimbursed out of the proceeds of land, and the additional proceeds would go to the construction of the remainder of the line. That brought them down purely and solely to the construction of the line by the proceeds of the land. They had proved clearly that it was not the most economical way for the colony, and the object of the amendments of the honorable member for Clermont was, to put before the House a more profitable way of constructing

railways. There was pretty strong reason for presenting a general policy for the whole colony, as the proposal of the Government to construct a railway to Carpentaria could not be called a general scheme in any sense; different districts had applied for railways, as the House knew, and, therefore, it was necessary to enunciate a principle by which the claims of districts could be met. The plan of the amendments was, that the whole colony should be cut up into railway districts, as shown in the schedules, which could be amended in committee as might be thought fit. A certain portion of the proceeds—perhaps fifty per cent. was too much—from the sales of land in each district would be credited to it for railway purposes. Meantime, until railways were authorised, the money might be used by the Government for any purposes that the general revenue was now used, or for the payment of old loans. When the time came for making the railways, then the money would be made good. If the principle proposed in the new third clause had been adopted ten years ago, the Gympie line and the Bundaberg line would now present no difficulty in regard to the ability of the country to undertake them immediately. At all events, a better color would be given to the log-rolling that now went on. What did the railway to the Gulf of Carpentaria mean but log-rolling? The railway to Roma meant nothing of that sort; for, if the Government had left out all their principles, and merely proposed the making of that line, it would be passed by the House. Again, say the percentage of the land fund credited to Bundaberg was £30,000, that would be, under direction of Parliament, placed to the railway construction account when the railway was authorised; and ten or twenty miles of land on each side of the line would be laid off as a railway reserve;—then, there was provision for the construction of the railway, and there was definite security for every requirement. The only reason that could be given for not going on with the work would be, that labor was not to be had in the colony; the claim of the district would be good, and would be admitted. If the question could be settled amicably by the House, that a railway out west should be constructed, it would be a great advantage, and time would be saved. The honorable member for Maryborough said the amendments were like a vote of want of confidence in the Government, and that therefore he must vote against them. The temperate speech of the honorable member for Clermont should have disarmed any opposition like that. The Government should take back their Bill, and consider how the amendments would work. If they did so, they would find that there was very little difference of opinion between them and the honorable members who supported the amendments. He could not see where the great difference was, unless that Ministers

differed amongst themselves on the main points of their Bill. The Treasurer said the scheme to put aside the land revenue would be ruin to the revenue and cause increased taxation; but it was hard to understand how he came to such a conclusion. The Attorney-General was antithetical, and not at all conclusive; he did not display his usual sharpness in understanding the question, but, as he almost invariably did, he imputed motives to a class, and then, in a covert way, to individuals. The amendments comprised a scheme got up by the squatters to improve their tenures. Well, he (Mr. McLlwraith) always advocated in the House, and was applauded by Liberal members, the construction of railways in the interior; and that, to carry them out, and for the settlement of the people on the land, the squatters must give up their runs. He never heard any honorable member, or any party in the House, go beyond that. The runs would remain under the Act of 1869, and the Government would have the same power over them as now; but the amendments would prevent the wholesale resumption of one strip of country, as proposed by the Bill, and they would give up completely one-half of the runs to be dealt with as the Government should think fit. If the Government proceeded on their plan, they would find that there was not money enough in the country for what they wanted. There never was a more liberal measure brought before Parliament than was comprised in the amendments, and it should offer inducements to the Government to accept it. Half the runs were absolutely given up for the Government to lease by auction to anyone they pleased—not to the present tenants. Let in a proper way, they would not only pay interest on the loan, but would ultimately create a fund that would pay for the railway itself. No member of the Government had dwelt upon that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said he had not had the opportunity of listening to the protracted, and, no doubt, instructive debates which had taken place on the Bill, and he confessed that for the past fortnight he had treated the subject with neglect. He thought that a great deal of trouble had been taken with the amendments, to string as much together meaning as little as possible. The honorable member for Port Curtis had well described them as a shadow.

Mr. PALMER: He did not do so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: At any rate, the difference between them and the Bill before the House was a shadow.

Mr. PALMER: He did not say anything of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well, he was quite content to let that pass. He had looked over the amendments, and he was certainly unable to find anything in them to raise further discussion on them after the Bill had passed the second reading. The question before the committee was, the setting apart of the railway reserve from Dalby to

Roma, and thence probably to Lansdowne Station. The honorable member for Clermont had said, that as the Minister for Works had stopped the railway at Roma, he undertook the business of compiling the amendments. It was twenty days since the Bill was read the second time, and if it had taken the honorable member for Clermont all but three weeks to compile his amendments, it would be very difficult to discuss them in one afternoon. How could they be introduced in a Bill which had been decided upon as the "Western Railway Bill"? He could not understand how matters referring to all the colony could be introduced into the Bill. He took the first sub-section:—

"Until authority shall be given by Parliament for the construction of a railway within any such railway district such moneys shall be paid into the consolidated revenue."

It appeared to him that that was the destination of all the moneys raised from the sale of land. There was no difference made by the amendment from the present practice; neither was there any means of providing for the use of those moneys than the use to which they were at present put. The only difference was, that there should be a separate account. The second sub-section provided for the refunding of the moneys to the account of the district in which the fund should be created, for the repayment of moneys advanced by the Treasurer; but no advance was provided for at all in the preceding sub-section. When the advance should have been paid, the advance for which no provision was made, then the railway might be constructed. There did not appear to be the slightest necessity for the fourth new clause:—

"All Crown lands situated within the area described in schedule A to this Act are hereby set apart and declared to be a railway construction reserve for the Southern Railway District and all Crown lands situated within such further or other areas as may from time to time be defined by proclamation of the Governor in accordance with resolutions to that effect to be passed by both Houses of Parliament shall be set apart as and declared to be railway construction reserves for the railway districts within which they are situated."

All that was provided for in the Bill itself; and nothing more could be done for the extension of the reserve until after resolutions were passed by both Houses of Parliament. Several amendments were proposed on clause 5 of the Bill; but he could not see why the honorable member for Clermont wanted to give the pastoral tenants a lease of half their runs, when they were provided for in the Bill already. The Bill provided that the lessee should retain possession of his run, except such portion as was actually taken up for railway purposes. Unless the honorable member wanted to give the squatters a more secure tenure than they had now, which the honorable member denied, he (the Secretary

for Lands) could not see what object was to be gained by the amendment in that respect. This was a provision which was to be an improvement on the Bill :—

“The lessee of each run or portion of a run so resumed shall be entitled to a lease of one-half part thereof on the same terms as it was held by him before resumption.”

What was the good of that? It was drawn with the appearance of being against the lessee; but honorable members knew perfectly well, that in making such alterations, there was an intention to get some advantage for the lessee. It was not unusual for amendments to be introduced in Bills, in order that some advantage not at the time apparent might be gained afterwards; amendments not generally understood by the House were introduced to ensure some advantage for the pastoral interest. The acceptance of the amendment would be to put the lessees to great expense in getting their runs surveyed, consolidated, &c. The division of the run being made, the lessee would be at liberty to occupy the whole by paying rent, or he might give up the half; and upon reservation of any land he would be entitled to a proportionate reduction of rent. The Bill was not less liberal than the amendments. With respect to the amendment on clause 9, about roads, he might inform the honorable member for Clermont that the system of reserving roads was tried before and found wanting. In Moreton it had interfered with the power to give titles to subdivisions when land was sold. Besides, it was not within his knowledge that any block of country of 12,000 acres was surveyed for sale, without roads through and around it. The reason why Collier and Co.'s scheme broke down was, because the land between Dalby and Roma was not fit to take up as payment for the railway; in fact, because the land would not sell. Yet the honorable member for Clermont proposed to reserve two miles wide on each side of the line for homestead areas. That was all on a piece with the way in which homestead areas were reserved heretofore. If the land was not fit for sale, or for any useful purpose, then it would come in for homestead areas! He (the Secretary for Lands) could not see that the amendments would make any material improvement in the Bill. It was easy for the Government now to provide roads. The money raised from the land was only to be credited to a public purpose; it was not to be saved. Nothing would be gained by the amendments.

MR. BUZACOTT said it was a subject of regret that, with the single exception of the honorable member for Maryborough, the Ministerial side of the House showed that they did not understand the amendments. The Minister for Lands had been analysing them without the slightest idea of what was intended by them together; instead of viewing them as a whole, the honorable

gentleman had taken line by line, and sentence by sentence, in a laborious manner, and could find nothing in them. He (Mr. Buzacott) was not surprised at him. The honorable member for Maryborough, who did understand the amendments, expressed his sorrow that the Ministry whom he supported had introduced so incomplete a scheme as their Bill, and acknowledged that the amendments provided a more comprehensive and just scheme and one that the country could understand. The House must be surprised that that honorable member, after making a long speech against the Ministerial measure, wound up by saying that he should support it. Had that honorable member no independence at all? He (Mr. Buzacott) was perfectly astonished that an experienced legislator like the honorable member for Maryborough should so prostitute himself as to state plainly in the House that he was going to vote for a measure that he did not believe in! The Colonial Treasurer, of whose speeches he was generally a great admirer, did not speak with his usual understanding of the subject; but had fallen into the fault of honorable members on the same side of the House, and had displayed—a hard word must be used, because it was true—his ignorance. The honorable gentleman said that the whole proceeds of land sales in the southern portion of the colony was £148,000, and that if half of that should be devoted to railway construction, the deficiency would have to be provided for by additional taxation; at the same time that he told the House that he was going to raise £200,000 per annum extra to that £148,000 received in the ordinary way. The Government considered that they would be able to sell an extra amount of land to carry out the railway to Roma. Really, he (Mr. Buzacott) wanted to know what was to prevent them, supposing the amendments carried, from raising an equal sum by the sale of land after the railway was constructed. The Government asked for £250,000 by way of advance, to carry out the line a certain distance. What was to prevent the raising of the sum necessary to meet the difference between that and £700,000, which would be required after the advance was expended? The honorable gentleman entirely misunderstood the object of the amendments, and had fallen into an error which a man so well up in finance should have avoided. Admittedly, the revenue should be protected. But how the scheme of the amendments would interfere with it more than the scheme of the Government Bill, he (Mr. Buzacott) could not see. By one, the land was to be sold before the railway was commenced; by the other, afterwards. The amendments would not involve the Treasurer in any difficulty such as the honorable member apprehended, until the £250,000 advance was exhausted. The Government would be able to go on; but when that was spent, they would have to stop their

railway, if they could not sell land. Under the amendments the railway would be constructed first; and, if the Government could not sell land to the extent of £200,000 per annum, they need not distress themselves. They would have borrowed the amount necessary to construct the railway, and all they would have to do would be to pay the interest by the sale of land sufficient for that purpose. The great advantage of the amendments was, that the Government would be able to choose their own time for selling the Crown lands; they need not sell for five or ten years, unless it was convenient, or they could hold on until the debentures fell due and then sell land to pay them off. The railway would be in operation, and the value of the land would be immensely enhanced by the improvement to the country consequent on the construction of such important public works. If the money necessary for the construction of railways was taken from the capital used in the trade of the country, by the purchase of land, a derangement of the finances was certain to result. If the system applied to the western railway extension was not applicable to the whole colony, why were the House asked to sanction a partial proceeding? The Minister for Lands had said the Bill was before the House twenty days, and that plenty of time had been given to honorable members to understand it. Well, he (Mr. Buzacott) came to town over a month ago, and he found that, with such a heap of things before him, and with his attendance in the House, he had hardly had time to understand the Continental Railway Bill and its effect upon the finances of the colony. Only a week ago, notwithstanding the flourishing of the Minister for Works in moving the second reading, the Government did not know themselves what they wanted to do with the Bill. The discussion, to-night, showed that the subject was not understood. The only information on the subject of the amendments was given by honorable members on the Opposition side of the House; and all that was said by honorable members on the Ministerial side was calculated to fog the subject. The Ministry had not answered the arguments of the Opposition. He had not the slightest sympathy or feeling for the leaseholders; if their land was wanted, it must be taken; but he could not stand by and see them treated as aliens. They were the men upon whom the prosperity of the colony rested. It was much better to reserve only one-half of their runs, as proposed in the amendments, than to disturb them by unnecessary harshness in reserving the whole. Half of the runs would give sufficient money for the construction of the railway. He had lived in the interior, and he knew what hardships the squatters underwent, and they had claims upon the Legislature the same as other classes of the community. The object of the Opposition was to help railway construction, and the amendments were to that effect, and were certainly no hindrance to it. The

honorable member for Maryborough should come over to the Opposition side. He should seriously consider his position before the committee went to a division; he should not submit to party considerations and vote for a measure that he could not conscientiously approve of.

Mr. DOUGLAS explained that, though he disapproved of the Bill, he did not approve of the amendments, though there were features in them which he considered were deserving of consideration. He never said he was decidedly opposed to the Government measure. He had crotchets which were not entertained by anybody else in the House, except by the honorable member for Maranoa. If they both found themselves in a minority, was that any reason why they should act without their parties? The honorable member for Maranoa would vote with the Opposition; he (Mr. Douglas) would vote with the Government, with whom he generally acted, because generally he approved of their principles. There was no inconsistency in his so doing.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he rose to correct a mistake he made in the earlier part of the evening in admitting that the effect of the amendments of the honorable member for Clermont did not give the pastoral tenant a much better tenure. His first assertion was right—that they did give a better tenure.

Mr. THOMPSON pointed out that the amendments of the honorable member for Clermont were founded on precisely the same principles as the Government Bill, but they failed to see why, if this principle were just and advantageous, it should be applied to a little bit of railway in the Western district. If the principle was true as to a few miles of railway, it was true for the whole colony; and if it was not true for this piece of railway, they should have nothing to do with it. The Government were in this position: that they had enunciated a principle that was true or false; if it were true, it was good for the whole colony, and if false, let them have nothing to do with it. They did not attempt to crush the Government Bill, but they said they would have the principle applied to the colony generally—that railways should be constructed by means of railway reserves and railway districts. Then they differed slightly with regard to the mode of dealing with the land. The Government scheme, as far as they could judge, was, that the lands within the railway reserves should be sold by auction in large quantities; and they said, the Government should resume the land under the Act of 1869, and that half the land should be reserved for the future. That was the American principle. They first ran the line into the wilderness; the land then became more valuable, and they sold it. What they contended for was, that half the runs should be resumed, and be available as soon as the line was constructed, for the purposes of settlement, and let the present

holders retain in their hands the remaining portion for the few years they would have to hold it, and, at the expiration of that time, it would probably be of such value, that it would pay for the whole of the railway line. That appeared to him to be a very just principle. The amendments also made ample provision for all classes of selectors, and contained a provision which would enable the Government, if they thought fit, to lease the land by auction in moderately large blocks—which he believed was a very good and a very necessary provision with regard to pastoral districts. The amendments proposed that two miles on each side of the line should be set apart for homestead selection, and he thought that, also, was a very good principle, because it would prevent the land being bought up by speculators, and sold afterwards at a great profit; and it would enable the formation of communities along the line, and create traffic. If the Darling Downs lands had not been sold until after the formation of the railway, the position of the country would be far better than it was. He was sure there was land there which would fetch from £2 to £5 an acre, and it would pay for the railway over and over again. They were always in a hurry to make railways; and if they were, they should retain the public property in their own hands until it became valuable, and not throw it open to be taken up by speculators, who would derive large profits from it. With regard to general principles the amendments and the Bill were the same; but they wished to make the principle of universal application, and he thought, if honorable members would give the matter a little calm consideration, and not jump to a conclusion, which they were not justified in doing, that members on that side of the House were actuated by any sinister motive, they would see that they desired to initiate a sound policy on the question.

Mr. FRASER was quite disposed to give full credit to the honorable member for Clermont for the purest motives and for full sincerity, in drawing up these amendments. He must confess that the time had been so short, and he had had so little opportunity of looking into the matter, that, perhaps, he had not made himself thorough master of their principles or details; but the first impression they made on his mind was, that they were not amendments at all, but that they were almost an entirely new Bill. It had been insisted upon, that it was better to make the railway and sell the land; and, as the honorable the Treasurer had put it, what was the meaning of asking to borrow £250,000? That fact spoke the intention of the Government to construct the railway to a certain extent, before any land was sold. Those honorable members who had dealt with the matter on its merits—the honorable members for Clermont, Port Curtis, and the Bremer—had endeavored to show that there was really comparatively little difference between the principle involved in the Government scheme, and the principle

contained in the amendments of the honorable member for Clermont; but he thought there was a great difference. He must claim for the Ministry, that they were the first Ministry who had brought forward a scheme based on the principle of constructing railways by sales of Crown lands—a principle which honorable members opposite acknowledged was right, and to which they wished to give more extended application. He admitted that there was much in the amendments, which might command the just consideration of the House; but at the same time, he maintained they were so important and so complicated in their character, and so complicated necessarily in their operation, that they should form a measure for consideration on their own merits. The reason why he felt disposed to support the Government measure, at present, in preference to the amendments, was this:—The amendments dealt very largely with the question—far too largely to be considered almost *impromptu*, as they were asked to consider them. They affected many interests in the colony, and they affected, also, the question of financial separation, of which they had heard so much; and, in fact, it was a scheme which ought to be considered by itself, whereas the Government proposal was a very simple one, easily understood, and easily dealt with. For that reason, should any mistake arise, it would be found much easier to correct it, when it was in a limited measure, than if it were upon such an extensive scale as that involved in the amendments of the honorable member for Clermont.

Mr. W. GRAHAM pointed out, in reply to the honorable member for Bandamba, that, under the circumstances of the case, seeing that the Continental Railway Bill had been narrowed down to a Bill for the construction of the Roma Railway, it was impossible for the honorable member for Clermont to have brought in his amendments earlier than he did. He thought that honorable member deserved great credit for the able way in which he had brought them in, and he regretted that the other side of the House had not given them the consideration they deserved. The honorable the Attorney-General, and the honorable the Minister for Lands, had stated that taking only half the runs covered some intention to get a better tenure for the pastoral lessee; but he thought, if they read the amendments, they would see that their tenure would be worse than ever it was before. It was provided that the lessee should have the use of the land in the resumed half until it was reserved, selected, leased, or alienated; but under another clause, it was provided, that where it was not thought desirable to sell by auction, or to otherwise alienate or reserve any of these lands, they might be leased by auction in blocks not exceeding twenty-five square miles; and he had no hesitation in saying, that if the Government offered them in that way, they would be readily taken up. The halves of the runs would, therefore, be entirely taken away, and

the right to run over them would be gone. He believed every acre of the twenty-five mile blocks would be taken up under lease at auction much more readily, even, than they would be purchased. He thought the amendments were most useful, and deserved greater consideration than they had received from the other side of the House.

Question—That clause 3, as amended, stand part of the Bill—put. The committee divided :—

AYES, 24.

Messrs. Macalister, Hemmant, King, Griffith, Fryar, Dickson, J. Thorn, Black, Lord, Beattie, Bailey, Macrossan, Hodgkinson, Foote, Groom, Low, Edmonstone, Pechey, Fraser, Stewart, Kingsford, Douglas, Pettigrew, and MacDonald.

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, Morehead, McIlwraith, C. J. Graham, Ivory, Buzacott, W. Scott, W. Graham, Amhurst, De Satgé, Royds, J. Scott, Miles, and H. Thorn.

Clause 4—"The provisions of this Act shall apply to the said reserve only"—was passed without discussion.

Mr. C. J. GRAHAM said, before clause 5 was moved he wished to insert, as a new clause, the first of the amendments of which he had given notice. [*Vide* page 379.] He did not intend to occupy the time of the House in debating the question further, but he would merely observe, that this amendment was not incompatible with the clause they had just passed. That clause simply provided for one railway reserve, whereas the amendment provided for the establishment of four railway districts, and that one-half the proceeds of the sales of land in those districts should be devoted for the construction of railways where none were being made. Some verbal alterations would be necessary, in consequence of the previous clause of the Bill having been carried, and he hoped the committee would accept the new clause as he proposed it.

Mr. THOMPSON pointed out the effect of the proposed new clause, and strongly recommended the committee to accept it, in justice to the various portions of the colony.

Mr. LORD called attention to the fact, that in the proposed division of the colony into districts, the Wide Bay and Burnett district was unfairly treated, and said that alone was sufficient to induce him to oppose the amendment.

The new clause, which was verbally amended to make it consistent with the preceding clause, was then put, and negatived on division.

AYES, 16.

Messrs. Palmer, C. J. Graham, Thompson, Buzacott, Morehead, De Satgé, J. Scott, McIlwraith, Ivory, Royds, W. Scott, Amhurst, H. Thorn, MacDonald, Miles, and W. Graham.

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Macalister, King, Low, Pettigrew, Hemmant, Foote, Hodgkinson, J. Thorn, Lord, Macrossan, Kingsford, Dickson, Black, Stewart, Edmonstone, Fraser, Griffith, Groom, Fryar, Beattie, and Pechey.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, the Chairman then left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.