

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 1876

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ERRATA.

In page 728, line 17 of the second column—instead of “not touch the few acres,” *read* “not touch more than a few acres.”

In page 730, line 43 of the second column—instead of “Treasurer,” *read* “Premier.”

In page 739, line 36 of the first column—instead of “Attorney-General,” *read* “Agent-General.”

In page 753, line 28 of the second column—instead of “Queensland,” *read* “Vineland.”

In page 790, line 25 of the second column—instead of “branches from establishments in the,” *read* “branches from the other colonies or the.”

In page 791, line 2 of the first column—instead of “law,” *read* “Bill.”

Same page, line 18 of the first column—instead of “reserves,” *read* “selections.”

In page 831, the line following the Speaker's statement on “Point of Order” should be read as closing the preceding debate.

In page 878, line 24 of the first column—instead of “Peak Downs,” *read* “Emerald Downs.”

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 3 October, 1876.

Endowments to Municipalities Bill.—Victoria Bridge Bill.—
Railway Reserves Bill.—Adjournment.ENDOWMENTS TO MUNICIPALITIES
BILL.

The PREMIER moved—

That this House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, for the purpose of considering the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the law relating to the Endowments to Municipalities, as recommended by message from His Excellency, dated 28th September.

Question put and passed.

On the House resuming, and the question being put—That the report of the committee be adopted,

MR. THOMPSON said he rose for the purpose of taking the same objection that he had taken on a previous evening, that the Bill had not been recommended by His Excellency the Governor. He had referred to the message with which the Bill was connected, and it was precisely in the same form as that on which he had commented before. Now, the question raised by him was of more importance than was generally supposed, and he wanted, before he went into it fully, to clear away a little of the fog with which it was obscured by the honorable Attorney-General a few evenings ago, when he said, that it being a message from the Governor, the House ought not to criticise it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did not say so.

MR. THOMPSON said that supposing it was the Governor's message, he should not hesitate to criticise it; but they knew very well

that when they were criticising it, they were not criticising the Governor's own language, but the language of the Government—something which had been written by a clerk; and the only reason why it had never received any criticism before was because nobody had troubled themselves about it. They were not going under any written law now, but they had the Constitution Act to go by, which said that all money Bills must come down recommended by a message from the Governor. He had looked at the message in question, and it only said that the Bill was transmitted for consideration. He had been told that that was the way the Estimates were sent down, but that had nothing to do with it; if they did come down in that way, and were not recommended by the Governor, all he could say was, that they came down improperly. He had quoted from "May," the other evening, to show that a message was not a recommendation, and he had since referred to the practice in the House of Commons to see what form was adopted there. It came down there as an actual recommendation, as was shown in regard to a petition, and honorable members must bear in mind that our Constitution Act referred to any message about a petition as well as a Bill. He found, on reference to the Journals of the House of Commons, that—

"A petition of George William Manby being offered for presentation,—

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer, by His Majesty's command, acquainted the House that His Majesty having been informed of the contents of the said petition, recommended the same to the consideration of the House."

That was exactly what had taken place in the present instance. The language of the message should be that His Excellency herewith transmits so and so, and recommends it for the consideration of the House; instead of that, His Excellency had simply transmitted the present Bill, and he (Mr. Thompson) contended that it did not fall within their written law—the Constitution Act. There was no custom in the matter, and the mere fact that it had been the custom to send down the Estimates without a recommendation did not make it good, for there was the Constitution Act to guide them. He should like to have the ruling of the honorable Speaker on the question.

The SPEAKER said that he had given the matter his consideration, and he thought that the transmission of a message by His Excellency the Governor was equivalent to a recommendation.

Question put and passed.

VICTORIA BRIDGE BILL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to authorise the purchase, by the Governor in Council, of the Victoria Bridge,

over the Brisbane River, and the payment of the debt incurred in the erection thereof, as recommended by message from the Governor.

MR. WALSH said he thought the Government were making a very great mistake in regard to the Bill, which was a private Bill. At present, they were not half through their Estimates-in-Chief, and yet they proposed to introduce a Bill which would involve the expenditure of £100,000; but, so long as they could manage to keep their supporters together, they went on voting money in the most reckless way. He protested against such conduct.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAY RESERVES BILL.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the debate, on the motion of the Secretary for Public Lands—

That this Bill be now read a second time,

MR. DE POIX TYBEL said: Sir, I cannot allow this Bill to go to its second reading without saying a few words. It affirms one of the principles upon which I was returned by my constituents, namely, the construction of railways by the sale of land; and I may say that I thoroughly approve of the object of the Bill, especially as the Government are prepared to take only one-half of the land which they first proposed to take. I do not know that I should have risen to address the House, did I not wish to make a few remarks in reply to the statements which were made when the Bill was last under discussion, by the honorable member for Maranoa, and the honorable member for Port Curtis. The honorable member for Maranoa then said, in regard to the construction of a railway from Warwick to the New South Wales Border, that the only reason which could be urged in favor of it was, that it would bring agricultural produce from New England, and put it into competition with the produce of our own farmers. Now, sir, I do not think that any agricultural produce has come over the Border from New South Wales. Then the honorable member for Port Curtis, in regard to the proposed railway between Warwick and Stanthorpe, said that the Government have no reliable estimate upon which to go; but I believe, that so far from that being the case, the Government are in possession of an offer from some contractors to make a line from Warwick to the Border for a lump sum of half-a-million, and that such line is to be made to the satisfaction of the Government. Now, what I wish to say is, that I think such an offer as this ought to be considered very reliable data indeed; namely, to make a line for a total of half-a-million, or about £7,000 a-mile. As to the other question alluded to by the honorable member for Maranoa, I think I can show that the tin mines have done a great deal in supplying traffic for the railway since they have existed—in fact, more than

any other industry. I have in my hand a return showing that over fifty-eight miles of railway, namely, from Gowrie Junction to Warwick, the returns for the years ending 31st December, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, and 1875, have been respectively as follow:—In 1871, when there was no tin, the total was in round numbers £8,518; in 1872, in the fifth month of which the rush to the tin mines took place, the traffic was £15,860; in 1873, £18,784; in 1874, £18,131, and in 1875, £17,807. From these figures it will be seen that the traffic over that portion of the line from the tin mines alone has been at the rate of £10,000 a-year. The falling off of between £300 and £400 in 1875 was caused in the smaller quantity of tin produced, owing to the depression in the tin market at home, and that shows how dependent the traffic was on the return from the tin industry. I have no doubt I shall be told that tin-mining is done, and that the traffic is falling off in consequence; but I will call the attention of honorable members to the fact, that last year, the value of tin exported from the colony was equal to £237,879, and I think I am safe in saying that there is no other industry which, had it suffered to the same extent from depression in the home market that tin has done, would have shown the same vitality—a vitality which speaks well for the permanence of this industry. I think if wool had been subjected to the same depression it would have collapsed altogether. Now, the return I have just read shows this: that if fifty-eight miles of railway produced £10,000 a-year, by a simple rule of three sum, the return over the whole line as it at present exists, would give £28,600, or one-fifth of the total railway revenue of the colony. Now, the extension to the Border consists of forty-one miles from Warwick to Stanthorpe, and twenty-seven miles to the Border, and hence the same traffic over forty-one miles would give £7,068 a-year, making a total of £35,688 a-year returned from the traffic from Stanthorpe to Brisbane; whilst if it was continued to the Border we should secure the whole of the New South Wales traffic from the tin mines there. I find from returns for the years 1874 and 1875, that there was sent from the Queensland tin mines *via* Warwick, 10,300 tons, and from the New South Wales tin mines to Sydney, *via* Grafton and Murrumbidgee, about 9,700 tons, or nearly an equal quantity. Now the whole of that 9,700 tons would have come by the line to Brisbane, if this proposed extension had been made. This traffic does not include a single ton of agricultural produce from New England to damage the Queensland market. The result of this would have been, that the above figures would have been nearly doubled, and we should have now been receiving £70,000 a-year added to our railway revenue as the result of the tin industry from our tin mines, and those over the Border: it would pay 14 per cent. on the half-a-million of

money required for the construction. There is another thing it would do; it would greatly benefit this part of the colony by providing dead weight for one ship per month, instead of the useless ballast which these ships carry away at the present time. This is no fancy estimate, for it is made from the actual traffic as it is now, and is not an estimate based upon any increased facilities of communication. In addition to tin, we also have wool from over the Border, and a great quantity, as a matter of fact, comes now from that direction. As to the quantities of tin coming down at the present time, I can refer honorable members to the returns published in last month's *Courier*, in which you will see that over 100 tons of tin come down from Warwick every week, and this, in the present state of the tin market, speaks volumes for the industry. As to the fact of agricultural produce being brought over to Queensland from New South Wales, I may state that this time yesterday I was on the road between Stanthorpe and Warwick, and met two drays loaded with maize on their way to Vegetable Creek; that does not look much like bringing produce from New South Wales. The price of maize they told me was 7s. to 9s. per bushel on Vegetable Creek, and even that gives them a very good margin of profit. As to there being no land for sale, I hold in my hand a return, laid upon the table of the House last session, showing that there was £35,330 16s. 9d. received for lands in the district of Stanthorpe alone up to the 4th August, and as to the likelihood of land being sold in the future, I may point to the case of Ransome and others, who are so anxious to take land that they sent a telegram down to the Minister for Works, in which I read:—

"Contractors prepared to take one hundred thousand acres along the line Treasury bills will not be circulated amongst the public and need not be less than one hundred pounds each."

I have nothing to do with this operation, but I quote it to show that there is land along both sides of the Stanthorpe line, and that there are already people who have offered to take it in payment of the railway. I hope honorable members who are advocating railways in other parts of the colony will also come forward and give us a few statistics, so that we may know what we are about, and have some reason for constructing the lines that are proposed. I have no doubt there are good reasons for them all; but those reasons ought to be given, and, for my part, I think I have shown sufficient grounds for voting for the second reading of the Bill.

MR. PECHAY: I think, sir, both sides of the House should approach this subject with the intention of doing the most good they can for the colony, and I hope that this is the spirit animating honorable members during this debate. In a young colony like this, what we require is progress, and that is not to be secured by better means than railway exten-

sion. Progress may be secured by other means, but in my opinion, the easiest and readiest way is by railway extension. I was not able to be in the House when this Bill was first discussed, but I have carefully read the speeches in "Hansard," and I am very sorry to see that the honorable member for Maranoa is not present at this time. His speech was one that was calculated to inform any politicians of the financial aspect of the question. To a very great extent I agree with the honorable member's ideas, and agree with them, perhaps, even more than with the ideas he would father upon the present Government. The honorable member was, however, wrong in the inferences he drew from the legislation which the present Government proposes, and did not appear to see that the proposed legislation is just the kind that would suit him, and carry out the ideas he promulgated in the previous portion of this debate. I certainly think with him, that it is much better for a young colony to borrow money outside of the colony than to hamper industries within the colonies, by taking the money from amongst ourselves for carrying on the railway construction. For myself, I do not see that there is anything in the Bill now proposed for a second reading to lead us to suppose that the Government when they brought it forward had the idea that they were going to get all this money out of the industries now being carried on in the colony—important industries that are doubtless looked upon by capitalists in town with a favorable eye. We have the sugar industry, the wool-growing industry, the agricultural industry, and various other industries; we have mining industries—not only gold mining, but tin and copper; in fact, sir, we find everything within ourselves if we will only work together for the good of the colony. There is everything here to make a great country if proper means are used. This being the case, I think it is not necessary for us to fall out amongst ourselves. We on this side hold the opinion that progress should be our motto; on the other side there are, I believe, a great many honorable members who hold the same opinion, the only difference between us being some slight divergence of opinion as to how this progress is to be gained. It would be a great pity indeed if such a fine colony as this, with all its undeveloped resources lying at a man's hand, should fail through want of our working together with a thoroughly earnest desire to turn everything to the best account. That I hope and think is what we all want. We have, however, now to consider the financial part of the arrangement. How is that to be dealt with?—that is the question. If you take the speech of the honorable member for the Maranoa, and read it alone, without any explanation whatever, I should be prepared to agree entirely with him that it is better to borrow money from outside the colony than to withdraw capital from within for the con-

struction of railways. If I for one moment had the idea that the present Government wished to withdraw capital that is now being usefully employed in the various branches of industry in the colony, to sink it, as he says, in the construction of railways, I would not only be the first to agree with him, but the first to assist in turning the present Government from the Treasury benches. Such a system would not agree with my ideas of how the Government of a young colony should be carried on, nor would it agree with the progressive ideas that have from time to time been put into practice by the Liberal party. It would be entirely antagonistic to the ideas which you yourself, sir, have so well advocated from these benches, and which have been promulgated to the colony by most of our greatest men, and therefore it would be entirely antagonistic to my ideas that I have held myself upon the subject of railways, public works, immigration, and land administration. These three or four things must be worked together, and the policy enunciated by the Ministry must take them all into consideration, and arrange so that the one shall fit into the other. Now, sir, although the Ministry, I conceive, have had an extremely difficult task to perform, they have performed it, to a great extent, for the good of the colony. They were forced into office at a time when some of our leading men were laid upon the shelf, and others had reasons, which they could not place on one side, for leaving the colony; the Government were reduced, I might say, but still I hope not reduced really, to taking some of the junior members of the Liberal party into office. Be it so. I hope, nevertheless, we shall find amongst the junior members of the Liberal party men competent to lead the affairs of the colony. This being the case, I think the cross-benches at any rate, if not the Opposition, should treat them with a great deal of latitude, and try and give them all the help they can. I do not fall out with the leading members of the Opposition. I believe they have given great assistance to the present Government, and I think they deserve every credit for it. It is patriotic on their part to do so, and I have no doubt time will show their patriotism is appreciated by the country. Nevertheless there have been, possibly from the exigencies of circumstances, some disappointed members on the cross-benches of the Opposition who would like to carry out their own ideas; and even supposing that the present Ministry fell in with the views of those honorable members, they would necessarily find it in their diploma to disagree with any line of policy that was inaugurated by the present Ministry. I may acknowledge to gentlemen on the cross-benches that there are many points in which I do not agree with the present Ministry, but at the same time I would not wish to overthrow what is for the good of the colony simply because I was not appointed Minister of the Crown, or did

not happen to be in the ranks on the front benches of the Government side of the House. I do not believe in that sort of thing. I believe we are all sent here in order to do the best we can for the colony at large, and the party in power will naturally put into office the men whom they think are best fitted to carry on the public business; but if a man is left out in the cold I do not see why he should proceed to tear everything into fragments; his duty is rather to show his patriotism by giving all the assistance he can. To return to the subject of the Railway Reserves Bill now before the House, I would wish to go through the speech of the honorable member for Maranoa, and make one or two observations upon it. I trust I shall not take up the time of the House very long. Some parts of the honorable member's policy are very good, and it is a policy that has been to a great extent adopted by the Government, although the honorable member himself, I think, must misconceive that policy. I conceive that when this land is reserved for railway purposes it is not necessarily reserved to be sold at once to anybody that will buy, but it is set apart as a security for the construction of these railways. We have heard a great many complaints from the northern members with regard to money being expended in the South on the construction of railways. These complaints are very aggravating, because had it not been for the resistance of northern members to the carrying out of our Southern and Western line in the way it should have been carried out, that line would at the present time have been paying interest upon the money. It must be, therefore, extremely aggravating to a member representing one of the producing industries of the colony who supplies that railway with traffic, to have it continually thrown in his teeth—"You have money expended on your railway in the South, and you give no more for railways in the North." At the present time, if our Southern and Western Railway line was only properly managed by this House, by Ministers, and the traffic and other managers, it would pay a great deal more than the interest of the money it has cost to construct, although after the beautiful management of the honorable member for Warrego, the last section of the line cost a vast amount more than it ought to have cost. I say, at the present time, and I challenge contradiction, if that railway were only properly managed, it would pay the full interest upon the money expended in construction. How then can honorable members from the North accuse the South of burdening them with taxation? Why, sir, we have always been a father to them. We have done everything we could for them; we have put up jetties and sent out exploring parties; we have done this, that, and the other, and have always done everything we could to develop the northern country; it has been placed in our hands by the British Government, and we have tried to do the

best we could with it, and I have never seen from the Colonial Office at home any complaint as to the manner in which the statesmen of Queensland have managed the colony, whether it has been from this or that side of the House. Instead of complaining, I think we may regard it as a great credit to the colony that we have done as well as we have done. So far as I know, there is no intention on the part of the present Government to withdraw their support from the system of opening up new country, and the advancement of civilisation—a system which has heretofore been recognised as one of the distinguishing features of the Governments of Queensland. The honorable member for Maranoa, in the course of his speech, said a good deal about the digging of holes at Sandgate *versus* a railway policy. Although the honorable member quotes from a professor of political economy in Oxford University, he forgets that it is quite possible a man may occupy that eminent position and yet know nothing at all of Queensland and its requirements. "No one doubts," the honorable member said, quoting from Bonamy Price, "that if the laborers, instead of constructing a railway, had been set to dig holes in the ground, and to fill them up again, a flood of poverty would have spread over the country." That, I suppose, means comparing railways with useless work. I do not think the Professor or the honorable member is at all correct in his conclusions, and I could find many quotations from the honorable member's own speeches which would cut all the ground from under his feet. I believe the honorable member knows a great deal better than this, for we must be all aware that even supposing the railway does not directly return to the Government the full interest for the money borrowed, yet, at the same time, there is a considerable enlargement of trade along the line, and in the country that it opens up. I believe there are certain lines of railway which may be carried on for years, and would not pay a penny of interest, and with respect to which it would be advantageous for the colony to borrow money to carry them out. I should not be influenced a great deal by the direct returns of the railways. Take the Southern and Western line for instance. Is there a man living within the influence of that railway who would not pay £2 or £3 a-year for the use of that railway? Supposing the Government gave out to-morrow that they were going to close that railway and revert to the old system of stage-coaches, is there a man who would not do what I have suggested? Even the honorable member for Bremer would not object to put his hands in his pocket as freely as I myself would, and pay his £3 or £4, rather than have the railway closed. There is an indirect advantage, I say, to be derived from these railways, which cannot be neglected in the arguments we advance on this occasion. There is another point upon

which the honorable member for Maranoa dwelt at great length, and I think he was perfectly right, because it is one of the main points in this question, looking at it from a financial point of view. I think the honorable member has given us a great deal of light upon this subject, and I was very glad to read in his speech what he had to say upon it. I quite agree with him that it is very wrong to withdraw money from the use of the colonies where it has been put to very good use. These railways, no doubt, can be better constructed by borrowing the money at home, at something like 4 or 4½ per cent. interest, than by inducing people in the colony to lay by their money in land. I have heard this once or twice called a Tory principle, but the primary consideration is that you are legislating for the general good of the colony. I believe that many people invest a good deal more in land than they ought to do. The temptation is very great; the land will probably rise greatly in value within a few years, and they will be able to sell to great profit. The capital is lying idle; it is not busy in either the fingers or brains of men, but is stuck in a lot of dead country, as you may say, and I think it had much better be used in carrying on business transactions, whether they be sheep-farming, cattle-farming, or any of the ordinary business transactions of town. Therein I agree entirely with the honorable member for Maranoa, but I think he has carried his argument too far. I think we shall under the provisions of this Bill, and the Western Railway Bill passed last session, find a number of people possessed of capital coming into this colony prepared to invest capital in land and disposing of it to their own advantage, and also to the advantage of the colony a large. I fancy the honorable member for Maranoa has not entirely grasped the idea that the Government have in proposing this Bill; the Government do not propose to put these six million acres of land into the market at once, they simply propose to put the lands aside as security for the money—thus following out the suggestion which has emanated from many of the northern members that different districts should pay for public works constructed within them. I entirely agree with that principle. There is a Bill now before the House for Shire Councils and so forth. We have had a great deal of the time of this House occupied for sessions past with discussions with regard to the financial separation of the colony, and I consider that this Railway Reserves Bill aims very greatly at that financial separation which the northern members have been advocating.

MR. IVORY: May I be allowed to call your attention to the state of the House?

Quorum formed.

MR. PECHY: I will not detain honorable members much longer, but there are one or two points to which I wish to call attention if they will be kind enough to listen to me.

The honorable member for Maranoa stated that we have tested the ability of the colony to purchase land most completely within the last eight years. Now, I must disagree with that statement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hear, hear

Mr. PECHEY: I disagree, because I do not believe that we have at all tested the ability of the colony. There have been some lands thrown open for selection; there has been an attempt made to further settlement upon the land, but the rôle of the present Ministry, and more than the present Ministry, the rôle of the party which the Government represents, is to further emigration to the colony, to have public works proceeding, and to have the public lands of the colony thrown open for settlement, at the same time that these public works are being carried on. This was to be the policy, and unless the three things are carried on the one with the other, it is impossible for them to be effective for the good of the colony. Therefore I say we have never yet had an opportunity of carrying out our policy in the way we would wish to have it done. We may have secured a certain amount of lands for settlement; we may have secured a certain amount of railway extension; we may have secured a certain amount of money to be spent upon emigration to the colony, but we have never had the three things carried out in the manner the thorough *bond fide* colonists wish to see them carried out, and it will only be when the whole of this House, or a greater portion of it, comes to believe in that policy that it will be carried out for the real good of the colony. Therefore I do not see that the honorable member is justified in making this statement that we have most completely tested the ability of the colony to purchase land within the last eight years. I have not the slightest doubt we shall have a great deal of capital introduced from the other colonies when this Bill comes into force; not that I am particularly anxious to see it, but I believe it is likely to be the case. Again, the honorable member should bear in mind that we have never had auction sales before at 10s. per acre as the upset price, and that will be a great inducement to foreign capitalists to buy land. There again I may observe that the sale of the lands along the railway line is not exactly the thing I believe in before the construction of the railway. Take as an example the Darling Downs and Moreton Bay districts. We started with the railway in 1863, and before we had it completed, the greater part of the lands were parted with at from 10s. to 20s. per acre; and, as was shown in the House by the honorable member for Toowoomba, those lands are now fetching at the auction sales from £8 to £20 per acre. Supposing the Government had constructed those lines of railway, and had borrowed money at 4 per cent., and kept the lands meanwhile for the use of the squatter—the pastoral tenant of the Crown—and had not

offered them for auction, what would have been the consequence? The consequence would have been, that instead of the colony being burdened with £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 of debt, we should at the present time have sold our lands and paid off the whole of the debt, and got a bonus besides to carry on other works in other districts. This is the reason why I agree, to a great extent, with the honorable member for Maranoa. A little further on, however, the honorable member cannot help allowing the old blood to appear, and we find him stating, "This land was actually taken up"—thus referring to the Wide Bay and Burnett districts—"and formed into a reserve, and put aside to produce funds for the construction of a railway in which the people owning the land have no interest whatever." Here we see the cloven foot—"The people owning the land." I should like to know who are the owners of the land in the Burnett district. Are they not the colonists? Are they not the people of Queensland?

The PREMIER: Hear, hear.

Mr. PECHEY: We have given a very easy tenure of these lands to certain gentlemen round about Gayndah and other districts, but we do not acknowledge them as the owners of these lands; and this being the case, we have a perfect right to take the lands wherever we require them—that is to say, we, as representatives of the people of Queensland. I see the honorable member for Port Curtis made some remarks with regard to ownerships of runs in these different districts, and particularly with regard to the proposed resumptions in the Burnett district; but I shall pass them over, and come to the Townsville and Charters Towers Railway. We are told that the lands belonging to these districts have been actually taken away to construct a railway from a rival port, namely, Bowen. Now, I should like to know what have been the proposals of the northern members from time to time with regard to financial separation. Do they want to have parochial government in every one of these beautiful seaports? I must acknowledge they are all beautiful seaports along our coast. Do they want parochial government in every one of them? In New South Wales they have only about two places that can fairly be called seaports. Here, in Queensland, we have them every 100 miles along the coast, starting from Brisbane. The great difficulty that Queensland has to deal with is, that the inhabitants of every one of the seaports want to draw all the traffic to themselves, and I think any Opposition that is not factious, any Opposition that is determined to carry out what is for the good of the colony, should try to assist the Government in putting aside these parochial efforts for bringing railways to their own doors. We are told in this speech of the honorable member for Maranoa that the railway from Charters Towers to

Townsville takes away some of the land from Bowen, and that the people of Bowen want a railway from their particular little jetty to the back country. It is possible the Government may have made a mistake with regard to the claims of the different places, but I have not the slightest doubt they have tried to do the best they could, and I think they should receive every assistance from honorable members opposite. There is one suggestion I should like to offer. I do not know whether it is of any value, but I think it will meet the views of the honorable member for Maranoa, and it is this:—Would it not be advisable to place these lands which are being reserved in the hands of commissioners for the purpose of carrying out these railway lines? That would have the effect of removing one of the objections of the honorable member, namely, that the land will be re-sold, or given away as conditional purchase and homestead areas, without the revenue of the particular district being benefited by it. I shall be inclined, when the Bill comes on in committee, to advocate a clause, or series of clauses, which will place this suggestion in a practical shape. But I wish at the same time that the Ministry would take the matter in hand and try to give effect to it, because they are in a much better position to do so than any private member could be. Before I sit down, sir, I should like to refer to the Stanthorpe line, which has been so ably referred to by the honorable member who represents that district. I cannot, Mr. Speaker, consider it consistent with my duty to sit down without saying a word in favor of that line. I think, sir, in no other country in the world but Queensland is there that peculiar antagonism there seems to be here, an antagonism which I do not see is at all necessary. It is suicidal to be cutting one another's throats, and I repeat there is no necessity for it. In any other colony in the world but Queensland they would have looked upon these Stanthorpe tin mines as a perfect windfall. There is no doubt they lifted us over the very great distress in the commercial world following the crisis of 1866; at the present time they are a source of great revenue to the colony; they are a source of employment to a great many people, and there is no man in the colony of Queensland but can go up there and earn wages sufficient to pay for his day's living, and so long as you can say that, I consider it is a great thing to be able to say for the colony. A man can go to these tin mines and almost get enough out of them to earn his "tucker," as the saying is, and probably a great deal more. This being the case, I think it is one of those things which this House should be particularly anxious to forward, and I should like to see honorable members on both sides of the House continually anxious to uphold the interests of the Stanthorpe tin mines.

Mr. IVORY: Have you any shares?

Mr. PECHAY: Because there, you have an opportunity of doing away with your orphanages and reformatories, and other similar things in the Estimates. You have an opportunity of sending people up there and telling them, "You can earn a living." That being the case, I think those tin mines ought to be fostered in every way, and the matter should not be laughed at; it should not be scorned at. At the same time, I certainly believe there are people in this colony who have lived so long in out-of-the-way districts, and who have come down to that, that they cannot have ideas of progress knocked into them. You may strive as much as you please, but there is the old thing still in them, and they will not have it knocked out of them. I believe, actually, in one portion of the country which happens to be washed by the same ocean as ourselves, and possibly some of the ideas may be washed across—that is the country of Chili—you can go into a large place that is called a run; you can stand on the top of a mountain and look over beautiful districts, and what do you find? There are beings amongst them who are called men, and what is their means of communicating with one another? They have little bits of leather medals with the names of the owners of the different stations on them, and they pass these amongst themselves on the one station; but if they go to the next station, they are no good at all, and, therefore, they are bound to stop on that station. I think there are honorable members in this House who are brought down to that level, that they would wish to have this the case here. I do not wish to see it; I like to see money circulating; I like to see improvements going on; I should like to see the Burnett district open, sir, and I have not the slightest doubt that that district might be opened by the sale of these lands, and that the timber, which the honorable member for that district represents as of such immense value, might be turned to good account, and that we should find human beings of more intelligence than now come down here from the Burnett district.

Mr. BUTACOTT said: I am sorry, sir, to observe that the debate this afternoon has been scarcely worthy of the subject of which it treats; but at the same time, I think it is worthy of the measure that has been brought before us by the Government. Sir, when this question came before this House about twelve months ago, I was a very strong opponent of it. I did not oppose it because it was brought in by honorable members on the other side of the House, or brought in by the Ministry of the day to whom I was in opposition; but I opposed it because I believed the principle on which that Bill was founded to be incorrect, and that if this House consented to endorse the principle contained in that Bill, it would, sooner or later, lead the colony into financial difficulty. Now, sir, the honorable member for Carnarvon spoke very well in favor of constructing the

railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe. His arguments, I admit, were, perhaps, as strong as any arguments which could be brought forward in favor of the construction of that railway. I acknowledge that there are considerations which, were the colony in a position to undertake the railway proposals of the present Government, would influence me to support the construction of the line from Warwick to Stanthorpe. At the same time, sir, I think their statistics with regard to the probable cost of the different lines of railway are quite beside the subject under discussion to-day. We have a certain measure before us; it is not a question as to whether we shall construct one railway or six railways, but whether we shall construct our railways on the principle laid down in the measure now before the House. I am an ardent railway advocate; I believe that any country which will not afford the construction of railways may well be deserted. I believe in internal communication, but, at the same time, I believe if we do not take care to carry out our railways and public works on a sound and prudent scale, we shall ultimately find that the colony will be brought up standing, and instead of the measures we have taken accelerating the progress of railways and other public works, we shall defeat the very object we are endeavoring to attain. I will not advert to the speech of the honorable member who has just sat down. He has told honorable members on this side of the House, in their absence, what they ought to do and what they ought not to do; but I think honorable members on this side of the House are perfectly capable of knowing what they should do, without instructions from any honorable member on the other side. At the same time, I admit that he probably echoed the feelings and desires of his constituents in stating his intention to give his support to this Bill, notwithstanding that he stated in the course of his speech that he is totally opposed to the principle on which it is proposed to carry out these railways.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: No, no.

MR. BUZACOTT: The honorable member distinctly said that he agreed with the opinion of the honorable member for Maranoa, when he stated that he would carry out these railways by means of borrowed money instead of the principle proposed by the Government in the measure before the House, by selling the lands of the colony and making the railways out of the proceeds. Now, sir, I do not think the House were prepared at the beginning of this session to hear that the principle of the Western Railway Act should be applied to the whole of the colony so early. Last year, when you, sir, brought forward that measure, you acknowledged that you brought it forward as an experiment, and you hoped, if it proved successful, the same principle would ultimately be adopted in connection with the other railway lines of the colony. I opposed that Bill at the time, but I say that you, in

taking that stand, were, at any rate, asking the House to make an experiment which was not altogether unwarranted by the arguments you brought forward. That experiment has not been proved.

MR. WALSH: Hear, hear.

MR. BUZACOTT: Not a single acre of land has been sold, or offered for sale, under the provisions of the Western Railway Act: and I put it to honorable members on the other side of the House, who appear to be determined to support this measure—whether it is fair in the face of strong opposition from this side of the House—and not only strong opposition, but the conscientious opposition which, I believe, honorable members on this side gave to the principle of the Western Railway Act—I ask, is it fair on the part of those honorable members to force this Railway Reserves Bill on the House in spite of that, and before the principle of that Act has had a fair trial?

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear.

MR. BUZACOTT: I only ask to give that Act a fair trial; and if it be shown that it is a success; if it be shown that large areas of land have been sold at auction at high prices; if it be shown that the land so sold will not be held by men who will not improve it or stock it, but merely hold it in the hope that after the railway is constructed they will be able to dispose of it to their own personal advantage—if these things can be shown, I will make one to support this Government or any other Government to carry out this system in every part of the colony. But we have no proof; we have nothing but the mere assertion of honorable members, that the principle of this Bill would be suitable to the circumstances of the colony at the present time. Any man who knows the peculiar circumstances of this colony, and the circumstances under which settlement proceeds, must be aware that any attempt to sell land wholesale will be a failure, so far as encouraging and facilitating settlement upon the lands of the colony is concerned. Now, sir, I have stated that I object to the application of the principle of the Western Railway Act to other portions of the colony, until that principle has been tried; but I wish to point out that the measure before the House does not apply that principle in its integrity to other parts of the colony. There are several important alterations, and in this I agree with the honorable member for Maranoa, who addressed the House on this question last week—that there are several most important alterations in the Bill now before the House as compared with the Western Railway Act of last session. In the first place, sir, this Railway Reserves Bill reduces the area which may be offered at auction in railway reserves from 10,000 acres to 2,560 acres. Now, if the principle of the Western Railway Act be correct, I want to know why have the Government considered it necessary to reduce the area to so

enormous an extent? If 10,000 acres may be offered for sale in the Western Railway Reserve, surely more than 2,560 acres may be offered for sale in the reserves in other parts of the colony. We have not had any explanation from the Minister who has charge of this measure as to why he has made this very important alteration in the Bill before the House, as compared with the Western Railway Act. In another matter, he has also made an important alteration. The Western Railway Act provides that two or three miles, I forget which, on each side—

Mr. PALMER: Two.

Mr. BUZACOTT: That two miles on each side of the Western Railway, the land shall be offered for selection only as homestead areas; but in the measure now before the House, no provision is made for homestead areas, except such as the Minister of the day may consider desirable. If the honorable gentleman wished to apply the principle of the Western Railway Act to the other parts of the colony, why did he not also apply the homestead area principle, instead of leaving it optional to the Minister of the day to proclaim those homestead areas? There may be individuals who do not like the homestead areas—who, like the present Minister for Lands, believe in selling the whole of the Crown lands of the colony at auction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: NO.

Mr. BUZACOTT: Nearly the whole; the larger portion. Why, sir, this measure shows it, and I maintain, the whole of the discussion which has taken place on the Crown Lands Alienation Bill is also proof that the honorable the Minister for Lands, if he had his own way, and was in a position to carry it through, would offer nearly the whole Crown lands of the colony for sale by auction. He stated so over and over again.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: NO, no.

Mr. BUZACOTT: In another important particular also, the Railway Reserves Bill differs from the Western Railway Act. That Act provides that an advance of £250,000 only shall be taken for the construction of the Western Railway line; in the Railway Reserves Bill now before the House, such sums may be taken on account as the Government of the day may ask for, or with a majority behind them they may be able to demand and secure. Now, if it were thought prudent or desirable to prevent any advance larger than £250,000 being required in the Western Railway Act, why should there not be a similar limit to the advances required for these other railways which it is proposed to start? The proposal now made in connection with those railways is certainly a departure from the principle affirmed by this House in the Western Railway Act of last session. And there is another matter, sir, in which this Bill differs from the Act of last year. In that Act the reserve was made fifty

miles on each side of the line of railway, but in the schedule to the Bill now before the House, I think the only one of the four in which they have adhered to that principle is the one from Townsville to Charters Towers; the others are all spread about without the slightest regard to the direction the lines may take. That is another departure from the Western Railway Act, and I think it will be admitted that the honorable the Minister for Lands, in introducing this measure, ought to have given the House full information, and have brought forward very strong arguments indeed to show why he should ask the House to assent to such a departure from the principle of that Act. But I have a very strong objection to the Bill, because it is in direct opposition to the principle of the Crown Lands Alienation Bill which we have devoted so much time to this session to make as near perfection as we can. That measure provides for conditional selection; it provides, in order to encourage settlement in the different parts of the colony, that large areas—the whole of the colony except the reserves—shall be open for selection by conditional purchase. I suppose this House would not have adopted this principle and allowed it to become incorporated in our land legislation, had it not been proved from experience to encourage settlement on the soil by men who will improve it and turn it to good account. I suppose the House has affirmed that principle after due deliberation, and it is scarcely prepared now—because the honorable the Minister for Works wants to start six railways—to ignore all that has been done during this session in regard to the alienation of the Crown lands of the colony. If the railways are to be spread all over the colony, then we must have railway reserves all over it; we must have the whole of Queensland turned into one enormous railway reserve, and under the provisions of the Bill, the whole of the land is to be offered at auction, and all the work we have done, in endeavoring to establish a system of alienation which will meet the requirements of the colony, will be completely upset. Why, sir, did ever anyone sit in a House of legislature before, and see produced, during the same session, two important measures so diametrically opposite to each other as the Crown Lands Alienation Bill and the Railway Reserves Bill?

Mr. PALMER: Hear, hear.

Mr. BUZACOTT: I do not think a precedent could be found for it in colonial legislation, or in English legislation either. I think, sir, conditional selection should be carried out in Queensland as an auxiliary to the railway. Conditional selection is supposed to encourage people to become *bona fide* settlers, to develop the estates which come into their possession, and if you wish *bona fide* settlement to take place, I want to know where you can have it except in proximity to lines of railway? How can a man carry out agriculture, for instance, if he be without means

of communication? If you sell the land adjoining the railway lines by auction in areas of 2,500 acres, it will be bought up by men who have no intention not only to improve the land, but even to reside in the colony; it will be bought up by men who will hold it, knowing the railway is being constructed, and in five years' time the market value of it will be enhanced five-fold. These will be the men who will secure these large areas of the finest lands in the colony, which are to be sold by auction. Is it not absurd? You will not allow a conditional selector to take up a selection near the railway, and you must send him out somewhere where he will be out of reach of communication—where he will be inaccessible. It seems to me the most preposterous thing I ever heard of. I maintain that conditional selection has been a success, and that it should be continued, and instead of circumscribing the area open to selection, it should be extended wherever there is reason to believe the land will be taken up in that way. Conditional selection, I think, is peculiarly applicable to railway reserves. You construct railways, but you do not want to pay all the money for their construction at once; and is it not absurd that while we can borrow money at four-and-a-half per cent. we should take the money already in the colony, which is worth from eight to ten per cent., and spend it in carrying out railway construction? If we proclaim the railway reserves open to conditional selection, the rents received from the selectors would defray all the expenses connected with the railways, and by the time these conditional selections became freeholds, there would be so much settlement on each side of the railway, that it would defray its own working expenses, defray its own interest, and you should have the railway itself a remunerative concern, which would amply repay the original cost of construction. Why, sir, it does appear to me, if you want to carry out railways, applying conditional selection to railway reserves is the mode of alienation beyond all others this House should affirm. But instead of that, we are going to submit the whole area at auction; we are only going to allow selection when nobody has thought it worth while to make an offer for the land at auction, and even then, after it has been refused at auction, this Bill will not allow the conditional selector to come in; it will be open at such price as the Minister chooses to put upon it, and it must be unconditional. The 8th clause reads:—

“Crown lands in the said reserves may be leased and alienated in any one or more of the modes following that is to say”—

And so on; and then No. 3 says:—

“Under the provisions of the laws in force for the time being relating to the sale of Crown lands by auction and subsequent unconditional selection.”

Now, sir, I think the Minister is bound to show this House why he would exclude the conditional selector from railway reserves, and if he intends to exclude the conditional selector, is there any hope that he will proclaim homestead areas? He is not compelled to do it. The 4th subdivision of clause 8 says:—

“Under the provisions of the laws in force for the time being relating to the selection of land in homestead areas.”

Well, sir, I do not believe there will be any homestead areas proclaimed at all. I think, so long as the Government can hurry off these lands at auction at any price, they will bring, at even the upset price, they will not see their way to sacrifice revenue by proclaiming homestead areas. Now, I object entirely to selling the Crown lands of the colony to provide for the construction of railways: I say the principle cannot be worked out, and if this House determines to carry on railways only as the Crown lands can be sold to procure money for their construction, instead of railway enterprise going ahead—instead of six railways being carried out in the colony, you will not be able to carry out those already undertaken. But, sir, Ministers do not intend any such result; they do not intend to stop until they have sold the land within those railway reserves, before they commence the construction of the lines. They know well, sir, that they will have to revert to the system of borrowing money for railway construction, which has been carried on ever since the colony has been in existence, and which, I believe, is so reasonable, so advantageous to the colony, and so absolutely indispensable to the carrying out of railways at all, that I believe, notwithstanding this Railway Reserves Bill, should Parliament authorise its being placed on the statute book—we will carry out our railways in precisely the same way as we have done hitherto. With the observations of the honorable member for Maranoa, that this principle, if carried out, will absorb the money required for the financial operations of the colony, I thoroughly agree. I am quite certain that if you subtract £600,000 per annum from the money available for commercial purposes in Queensland, you will bring about a vast deal of commercial distress; and commercial distress not only means the distress of those engaged in commercial operations, but of the whole people of the colony, from one end to the other. I will not dilate on that part of the subject further than to say that at present our expenditure of borrowed money amounts to £600,000 per annum, and I presume the Government do not propose to discontinue the railways at present going on, or to stop any other public works which it has been deemed necessary by this House should be continued. I presume if they commence these four railways—from Warwick to Stanthorpe, Bundaberg to Mount Perry, the extension of the

central line, and the line from Townsville to Charters Towers—they intend to carry them on in a way which will be not altogether slower than the progress we have seen in existing railways. But, sir, for the sake of argument, I will suppose that instead of spending £150,000 or £200,000 per annum upon each railway, the Government mean—because I will not press my argument too far—the Government mean to spend only £100,000 per annum on each of these new railways; I have shown that at present they are spending £600,000 per annum, and £100,000 additional on each of these four will make up the total sum to one million sterling per annum required to carry on this scheme of railways and public works that the Ministry now bring before the House. Now, to carry out this scheme, what do the Ministry propose to do? To ask the House to authorise per annum the expenditure £600,000 only. Why, sir, they should have asked for £1,200,000 if they were really sincere and in earnest. If they really intended to carry out this scheme, I say they will need fully £1,200,000. £600,000 is the present rate of expenditure; then there is £100,000 for each of these other railways proposed to be started, and in addition there no doubt will be other little items which do not appear in the programme, but which will most unfailingly be discovered as soon as this great scheme of public works is carried into practical operation. I say, therefore, had they been sincere with this Railway Reserves Bill, instead of bringing before the House an estimate for £600,000 for railways and public works, they would have gone in for an estimate of at least £1,200,000. Had they done so, probably the House would have felt itself bound to consider seriously whether it would authorise so enormous an expenditure—an expenditure fully equal to the total annual revenue of the colony. The honorable the Minister for Lands would, I am certain, have had to show very strong, very powerful arguments indeed, to have persuaded the House to authorise the carrying out of public works on any such scale. Still, I do not say that the argument could not have been brought forward. I acknowledge that the Maryborough district, the Stanthorpe district, and the Charters Towers district, each has its own claims for public expenditure, for improved internal communication and other public works necessary for its progress and prosperity; but, I cannot accept a scheme like this—an insufficient, incomplete, crude scheme like this now laid before the House, in the Railway Reserves Bill, at any price whatever. I am quite sure, sir, if Ministers are sincere, if they really intend to carry out this scheme, they are utterly incompetent to do so; for no Ministry would have submitted a scheme so utterly incomplete, so imperfect as this, and attempt to apply for such an absurdly low sum, if they thoroughly understood the question

they brought forward. On the other hand, if they be insincere, and under a pretence of spending £600,000 for railways they mean to spend £1,200,000, are they not deluding the House, and not only the House, but the whole people of Queensland? Looking at this scheme in any way, I cannot see that the Ministry can be sincere and competent. I cannot but take one or the other alternative: either they are wholly insincere, and are endeavoring to delude the House, or they are perfectly incompetent to carry out the works they have submitted to the House. Now, sir, I wish to call the attention of the honorable member for Toowoomba, and other honorable members living in the neighborhood of the Darling Downs, to one particular feature of this Railway Reserves Bill. The honorable member will know, that only a fortnight since—indeed, I think it was only this day week—the honorable the Minister for Lands asked a committee of this House to make the whole of the unalienated portion of the Darling Downs a homestead area. Now, we in the central division have not got the Darling Downs, I am sorry to say, but we have something which I hope will be, in the course of time, very nearly equal to the Darling Downs; we have got a magnificent district far greater in extent than the Darling Downs, and I believe a district which will one day prove equally fertile; and now the Ministry, by this Railway Reserves Bill, propose to deal with that, in what way? Why to auction it all off, and prevent settlement. They say—Do not allow any homestead areas there; do not allow conditional selection there, for the central district will become too powerful for us. That appears to be the argument the honorable the Minister for Lands ought to have brought forward. Have they been sincere in proposing to create the whole of the Peak Downs a railway reserve? I should like to know what the honorable member for Toowoomba would have said had the whole of the Darling Downs been included in a railway reserve. Why, sir, we should hear nothing in the House but “the Darling Downs” from one week’s end to another. Even as it is, we have heard more about the Darling Downs than any other district in the colony; and to auction off one of the finest agricultural districts in Queensland, which this will be as soon as the railway makes it accessible, is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard of. I will not apply to it the epithet it seems to me to deserve, but I do hope honorable members on the other side of the House will have enough of fairness in them to say, “We will not allow so absurd a disposal of one of the finest districts in the colony as is contemplated in this Bill.” If it be necessary to resume it, why not throw it open to conditional selection? I cannot understand why we should apply to railway reserves any principle of land alienation that does not apply to other portions of the colony.

So long as you proclaim the reserve; so long as you apply the whole of the proceeds raised from the alienation of lands within the reserve to the construction of the railway, or to guarantee its construction, as some honorable members think should be done, where is the necessity for adopting this special system of alienation? I fail to understand why railway reserves should be auctioned off, and that the other parts of the colony should be open to selection as homesteads or as conditional purchases, and that that submitted to auction should be in areas of only 640 acres. Why make 640 acres the area to be offered at auction in other parts of the colony, and the area in railway reserves 2,640 or 10,000 acres. I should like to know. Why there is this distinction I cannot see; there is no argument in favor of it at all. The honorable the Minister for Lands admitted that the railway reserves are more extensive than is really required, and that he is in a position to leave one-half of the area in the hands of the pastoral lessees; but still he wants to auction it off, and get a higher price for it, and to prevent settlement. I will tell him what the pastoral lessee will do if it is offered at auction. He will carefully go round the whole of his run, and select the eyes of it; he will obtain those eyes at auction, at whatever price they will fetch. Do you think the pastoral tenant on the Peak Downs will allow a man from Victoria to come up to this colony and acquire a freehold when he requires it himself: when he is in a position to know the most valuable portions of the land offered, and when it is in close proximity to his other freehold? Do you think that man will stand by and let a stranger come in and buy this land when it is offered at auction? No, he will compete with him to the farthest extent that he sees it to his interest and advantage to go. It is not my intention to detain the House much longer with remarks on the measure before us. I cannot see on what ground the Government can take up the time of the House by asking it to discuss a measure such as this, which is intended to apply to districts, every representative of which, I believe, is conscientiously opposed to it. I believe I can speak for every honorable member representing the central district of the colony, when I say that not one of those members wish railways, or any other public works by which they may benefit, to be charged to other districts. If they ask for these railways, it is with the belief that their cost will be allocated to the districts which benefit by their construction. It has been said that one of the principles of the great Western Railway Bill is contained in the Bill now under discussion; but there is no necessity, sir, for affirming that principle unless, under that affirmation, we can find how it will make the cost of these lines a charge on those districts benefited by them. Under that Act a majority of this House can plunge

the colony to any extent into an expenditure for railways in favored districts, and absolutely refuse to spend a sixpence for railways in other districts which are not fortunate enough to be so well represented. This Bill gives no district any guarantee whatever that a railway will be commenced within its boundaries; and if commenced, it gives no guarantee that the work will be prosecuted in such a way as to be of any immediate or prospective advantage to that district. If honorable members will carefully consider what it is that the Ministers propose to do, I think they will come to the conclusion that I have done—that either they are insincere in, or incapable of, proposing railway legislation during the present session. Each railway started will require to have its officers, its working staff, its laboring men, and its very costly plant—which, I may observe, on the Northern line, cost between £1,000 and £1,500—before the work could be started at all. All this expensive plant and working staff will have to be provided on each of the proposed lines before it can be commenced, and when they have been provided, the Government will be bound to carry on the work. Contracts will have to be issued, and money will have to be provided for paying those contracts, and it will be of no use for the honorable Colonial Treasurer to come down to this House and say, as he did at the commencement of this session, that the state of the public revenue is not such as to warrant the colony going into more public works. It will be seen by honorable members how serious are the demands that can be made on the colony—the Government will, under the scheme proposed in this Bill, be committed to these railways: thousands of men will have to be employed at one time, large contractors will have to be paid the amount of their contracts, and the works must of necessity go on. Such a thing as suspending them will bring unexampled distress upon the whole of the colony. I think, therefore, it will be granted that it requires very great and serious deliberation before this House passes a measure—hastily as it must do—introducing an enormous system of railway construction like that proposed in the Bill before us. I find that, with regard to the principle of the Bill, there is no such immediate necessity for making the land of the colony responsible for the public works of the colony. Why, sir, the whole of the proceeds of land sales by auction, by selection, mineral lands, rents of land—in fact, the whole land revenue received from all sources, has been absorbed hitherto in paying the interest on the public debt. It will be seen, on reference to the Treasurer's estimate, that the estimated total receipts from the various sources of land revenue, after deducting cost of surveys, &c. during the current year, is a little under £380,000, whilst the interest on our debentures amounts to £346,000; and if to

that we add the costs of the department, it will be seen that the whole revenue from the Crown lands is already absorbed in paying interest on the public debt incurred by the construction of railways and other public works. There is no need, therefore, except for the purpose of allocating to each district its proper share of public works expenditure, to bring in a hurried measure to fix the cost of public works upon the land revenue of the colony; it is so at the present time, as the interest on the public debt does fall upon the lands of the colony. Moreover, if up to the present time the whole of the land revenue is so used, how can we expect to so increase that revenue as to be able to pay from it not only the interest but the cost of construction also? If honorable members will carefully look at the question, they will see that it is absurd to expect it. Sir, there is one thing which goes far with me when I consider the circumstances connected with the introduction of this Railway Reserves Bill. I noticed last session, after many honorable members had gone home, that the honorable member for Maryborough, the present Minister for Lands, when the House refused to vote money for a Maryborough Railway, introduced a measure almost identical with the one now before us, with the hope of inducing the House by that means to sanction the work. It is simply because the Government are afraid that if they brought in a Bill for the construction of the Maryborough Railway without such a measure as this—that such a Bill would not be entertained—that they have now introduced this Bill. Why, I ask, should the whole of the other districts of the colony be subjected to what I believe will be a most injurious experiment, in order to have a railway made from Maryborough to Gympie? Why, sir, it would be much better for this House and the whole colony if provision was at once made for this experimental line out of loan; for my own part, I should rather have that than this experimental way of dealing with the Crown lands of the colony. In the one case, we should know, at least, the extent of the evil—in the other we cannot possibly ascertain it; in the one case we should know the result in a comparatively short time—in the other we should scarcely know more than we do now. There is another very serious matter for consideration with honorable members who represent districts where they cannot possibly have a railway reserve, or supposing they have a reserve, where they cannot hope to obtain sufficient money from the sale of land in it to construct a railway. I have heard some honorable members opposite say that between Brisbane and Sandgate a line of railway would be most profitable; but it has been acknowledged that nowhere between the two places is there sufficient Crown lands, the proceeds from which, if sold, would construct such a line; so that even if this Bill is passed, that railway cannot be made except

by private enterprise, and I do not think honorable members will be inclined to accept that. Because a district has had all its Crown lands alienated, therefore the Government say, you shall not have a railway; that is a very important consideration for honorable members opposite. As I understand this Bill it says that no district shall be provided with railways unless there is land within such district to pay for the cost of construction. I shall not occupy the time of the House much longer; I feel that I have spoken at some length, but if I have done so it is because I am firmly convinced that this measure is one that cannot succeed—that it must fail, and that if it comes into operation at all it will be seriously injurious to the colony and destructive of the progress of it. It is for that reason, sir, that I oppose the proposition now before us. It has been said by some honorable members opposite, that we on this side are opposing the Bill because the present Government introduced it. I deny such a charge; as I now contend for the same principle I advocated long before I was a member of this House, which is by no means the principle of this Bill. It is, however, a principle which I believe the Government will have to revert to, if they intend to carry out a satisfactory and progressive railway system in this colony. Before I sit down, I wish to place my opinions on this question before the House in a substantive form, as what one may say in a speech is sometimes liable to misinterpretation. I have therefore resolved entirely on my own hook, as the saying is, to submit in the form of an amendment on the motion for the second reading of this Bill the following:—

That the question be amended by the omission of all the words after the word "That," with the view of inserting in their place the words,—

1. While affirming the principle of making the cost of railways and other permanent public works a charge upon the Crown lands, this House cannot approve of the exceptional methods of alienation applied to the reserves intended to be created by the Bill now before Parliament.

2. That the said Bill confers powers upon the Ministry of the day which might be used to the discouragement of the *bona fide* settler and the injury of the colony.

3. That pending a trial of the principle of the Western Railway Act, this House is of opinion that it would be inexpedient to at once extend the principle of that measure to other portions of Queensland, but is willing to make liberal provision on the Loan Estimates for such railways and other works as are requisite to ensure the progress and prosperity of the colony—the cost of such works to be subsequently made a charge upon the respective districts benefiting by their construction.

Mr. BAILEY: Sir, there is an old Scotch custom of answering one question by putting another, and when the honorable member for Rockhampton asked the House whether the whole of the colony is to be burdened in order to make a railway from Maryborough to

Gympie, I reply by asking him, why all the districts of the colony should have been, and be burdened by making the Northern Railway, which has been constructed at very great expense, and will be of no use to anyone without indefinite extension and immense further expenditure? I think, sir, that honorable member should be the last man in this House to take the stand he has done this evening. But it was not for that purpose that I rose, but rather in consequence of the very personal appeal which was made to me by the honorable member for Maranoa, who appeared as if he felt doubtful how I should give my vote on this occasion. I confess that I was myself doubtful at first, as I felt that, although "the hands were the hands of Esau, the voice was that of Jacob," and that although, apparently, the scheme was the scheme of the Government, I recognised in it the ideas of the honorable member for Maranoa. That honorable member asked:—

"What is it that our farmers are suffering from at the present moment? Are they suffering because they cannot get land to cultivate? Is it because there are no facilities of road or railway carriage to convey their produce to market? No. The farmers in the neighborhood of our best modes of communication are suffering from want of markets."

That is the very reason why we want a railway in the district I represent; we have resources of all kinds, we have large mineral and agricultural resources, which would return an immense revenue, but until we have the means of getting our products to market, we shall not be able to develop those resources as they should be. The district of Wide Bay is most prolific in resources, but until there are the proper means of communication and conveyance its resources cannot be developed. I believe that all districts should have the control of their own public works, and we in Wide Bay do not want sixpence from the proceeds of lands in other districts, but to make our own railways and public works out of our own lands; and I look upon this Bill as introducing the thin edge of the wedge, and being the first instalment of legislation in that direction. The honorable member for Maranoa, in support of his arguments, quoted from Mr. Bonamy Price a theory which no doubt is very good in the country in which it was delivered, but which is not applicable to this colony. It would hold good in England, where they have a fixed population, but here we have not a fixed population, but one increasing rapidly; there they have fixed resources, the value and quantity of which they know, but here we have unlimited resources, which we cannot develop until we have better means of communication. There is no other means of that communication except by railways, and although the system now proposed may have its faults we had better have that than none at all. I can only say that I have got over some of my difficulties respect-

ing the course I should adopt in regard to this Bill, and that I intend to vote for the second reading of it.

MR. DE SARGE: The honorable member who has just sat down, in attacking the member for Rockhampton, has not fully understood the argument. The honorable member, with every well-meaning member of the House, regrets that the Rockhampton Railway was ever begun at the time it was begun, and if we go back to the history of that particular line of railway, we shall go back to the system of log-rolling. It was utterly useless, and it was given as a sop to enable the southern end of the colony to continue in the most reckless expenditure. The argument then was, "We want to spend as much money as we can in the southern districts; we cannot do it without a show of some little expenditure for you; we will therefore give you at once a useless piece of work, and in return, we shall be open to spend what we like in the southern end of the colony." That railway could, even at that time, with decent care, have been constructed for half the money which was expended. It could now be done much quicker, and had we to begin afresh, it might be done for half the money, and it would not retard the progress of the colony. It was a block from the first, but within the last two or three years we have done as much to develop it as we did during the twelve years previous. The commencement of that railway was a mere piece of log-rolling. With regard to the Bill now before the House, if we consider the circumstances under which it was introduced, we can accuse the Government of nothing less than midsummer madness. When the Bill was introduced by yourself, Mr. Speaker, it was described and thought to be a most dangerous measure by a large portion of this House—by the members who, residing in the districts to be affected, had the means of knowing, not only the value of the lands, but from their financial position, the likelihood of the scheme being successful from a pecuniary point of view, and from that point of view the scheme was deprecated. As the member for Rockhampton has pointed out, we have not had the decency to wait for the experimental trial of the Western Railway, which, although I do not claim the gift of prophecy, I predict will prove an utter failure. I do think we might have the decency to wait for the result of that experiment before this measure was introduced. I think if the Government had taken a legacy from their predecessors, and had remembered the farewell speech of the late Colonial Treasurer, it would be well. While that honorable gentleman was abandoning the pursestrings of the country, he described the state of the colony at that time, and in accepting that legacy, this Government have accepted the opinions of the Colonial Treasurer, who did not advise them to rush blindly, like an Indian fanatic running a muck, into this

Railway Reserves Bill. If they had taken to themselves the opinions of a man who, whatever his opinions might be, sitting as he did in opposition to us, was a sound financier, they would not have brought forward a measure so harassing and utterly unworkable as that before this House, a measure to which I shall give my most uncompromising vote, a measure which the leaders of our party have described as a measure which they will not assist in making any better in committee, a measure which the House ought to reject from the first clause to the last. I admired to a certain extent, a certain portion of the speech of the Minister for Lands, which blended with considerable craftiness, the scheme of railway construction in the colony, with the system of paying for the railways by the lands to be sold within these reserves. No doubt the Government would like to saddle upon us, on this side of the House, opposition to railways in any portion of the colony, because we do not vote for the Railway Reserves Bill. I entirely deprecate that. I confess to some change in the aspect of affairs since we proposed the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, and I say that, with a stand-still in emigration, with our navvies and laborers going out of the country, we must continue the policy of reproductive public works and railways, but the railways must be taken in hand by a strong Government, who does not on every trifling occasion give way to their supporters. The honorable member who last addressed the House presented with considerable force the claims of his district; but I am afraid that a railway project in that portion of the country represented by the honorable member for Wide Bay is one of those railways which, if presented to-morrow, would remain like a log upon the country as did the Rockhampton Railway, some ten or twelve years ago. I can only speak from personal experience with regard to two of these railway reserves. If I am to take my general opinions from an intimate knowledge of these, I can at once state that the scheme as drawn out by the Minister for Lands must be a failure from top to bottom. In the Western Railway Reserve there was this to begin with: We pledged ourselves to a quarter of a million to start with, and with that we are now working; but to dream that you can, for a moment, expect for years to get anything like a large sum of money to complete the Roma Railway by the sale of land, even taking into consideration that choice district around Roma and the Fitzroy Downs, is an absurdity to those who know the country. Why, the eyes of the country there have been already picked out. The circumstances of the colony are not such as to throw any amount of money in the market for that purpose at the present time. The financial view of the question has been ably dealt with by the member for Maranoa, who has shown that every pound we invest in land of our own is

taken from the circulation of the county and must damage some general industry; and I am sure, from what I can see, from the present plans of the Government in putting the lands into the market, you cannot hope to sell anything like a quarter of a million sterling on the Fitzroy Downs for some years. With regard to the country between Roma and Dalby, from recent experience, I can state that a more God-forsaken piece of country I have never ridden through. If we are to tax the interior by these means, it would have been much more manly if we had at once asked for three-quarters of a million sterling to carry on that line. The measure was ably introduced by yourself, sir, who I considered at that time was a dangerous man; and, sir, perhaps I may be permitted to remark that the dangerous man very often occupies the position of Speaker in this colony. However, Mr. Speaker, on that occasion the measure was infinitely better introduced, and more able and better reasons were given than have been given in connection with this Railway Reserves Bill. I will now speak of the reserves that I can speak about with a long and intimate acquaintance. I know nothing of the Kennedy Reserve, and I will at once say I know little or nothing of the Wide Bay Reserve, although I have been through some portions of that district. Starting with the southern reserve, we are asked to give our consent to a scheme by which the railway to Stanthorpe has to be paid for by lands selected not along that line, for it is admitted the country is poor, and would never realise 10s. per acre, which is the upset price—but we are asked to pay for it virtually with a country already harassed in other ways—already a prey to the Act of 1868. I mean the Yandilla country. The inhabitants of that country have now come under the Crown Lands Alienation Act, which fixed it as a homestead area; the country is already resumed under the Act. This choice and favorite portion of country is now again saddled with the Railway Reserves Bill, and the anomaly exists that that country, limited to homestead areas of 640 acres, is asked to pay for the Stanthorpe Railway. I say, on the face of it, a scheme of that kind carries with it an untruth. It is deluding the House to lead us to suppose that the Stanthorpe Railway can be made from the proceeds of any country along this line, except a few small areas in it; and with the Darling Downs already set apart for homestead areas, and already therefore out of the provisions of this fresh Act, I will venture to say that the remaining lands in the Southern Railway Reserve will not altogether, from first to last, pay for the sixty-eight miles of the Stanthorpe Railway; if they try for years to come, it will never realise that. As to the central reserve, which the honorable member for Rockhampton says is a strong point, though it is deprecated by the members of the Central district, I can speak with

an experience seldom given to honorable members of this House. These downs, consisting of what you may call black-soil land, were, with the exception of four stations, at one time or another, in my charge, and I can state pretty accurately what is likely to be returned in point of sales. The total amount of land you may expect to sell from the Central Railway Reserve amounts to about 800,000 acres, and of that there has already been, or is likely to be alienated 150,000. Of the remaining 650,000 acres you may put down 200,000 acres that are never likely to be taken up at all at ten shillings per acre. You have, therefore, left 450,000 acres to deal with to get your £680,000 required for the proposed railways throughout the Central districts, and that quantity, I say, will never meet it in any way. When the Minister for Lands asked about a Central Railway Reserve, dealing with 8,000,000 of acres, of which he would reasonably suppose that one million would sell readily, and that from that source he could obtain the entire amount, he spoke of a district of which there is only a small patch of first-class country, while the rest is given up entirely to kangaroos. That is the country you are dealing with, and I know from my own data that this Bill must be an utter financial failure. With regard to a Southern Railway Reserve, and as regards the Central Railway Reserve, I feel that the Bill is rotten to the core. The effect of this Bill upon the holders of country will be disastrous in the extreme, and to the capitalist, to the squatter who has money or is backed up by capital, it will offer the means of securing the very eyes of the country and the best portion of it. He will, as an individual, no doubt rejoice at seeing this Bill pass, although he may deplore it as a good colonist. But, as the member for Rockhampton said, the struggling squatter it will simply ruin; it will prevent legitimate settlement on the land, which seems to have been a favorite cry in the House; it is, in fact, the worst poor man's Bill ever introduced into this House. I may state, as one practical effect of this Bill, that the amount of grants that will be forfeited to the Crown will be very considerable indeed. If the Government had really wished to meet the wishes of the country, they would have proclaimed certain reserves along the lines of railway that have been surveyed. I believe it is the desire of every member of this House that a certain amount of land on each side of the projected railways, where lines are almost certain to be built at some time or another, should be immediately set apart; they should be saved from pre-emption. I am now talking against my own interests in this matter. A large portion of the choice lands of the colony have been already parted with under the 1869 Act. Of course, the squatter has a perfect right to pre-empt under that Act, but by a feasible scheme, that of the retention of the lands on either side of the projected rail-

ways, a certain amount of land will be at once saved for all purposes of legitimate settlement, and I feel certain that, on that common ground, we could all in this House have assisted the Government had they been really careful in their method of pushing their railway extensions—could have assisted them in reserving and resuming the lands for the purposes of settlement. This would have been the case if they had manipulated their railway scheme properly: a majority would have been ready to help them with the required lines, and in obtaining the money, and we should have had, instead of a Bill that will at once harass and damage existing interests without benefiting the colony in any way, a prospect that the railways, after being pushed on to their destination, would have at once enhanced the value of the lands proposed to be sold at twice or three times their value, and this would have far more than counterbalanced the interest paid on the loans. I quite believe that this scheme of railway extension is an afterthought, and that it never formed a portion of their original scheme. During discussions on previous occasions, we have already admitted that the House and country are prepared for certain lines of railway, and I believe if the Government had dealt with the matter seriously and properly, they would have practically assisted in pushing on certain lines to tap the interior. Probably the Southern line would have been commenced, but I do not think the House would have gone so far as to assert the principle of a coast line to Gympie; because I believe lines like that would be found to be quite as abortive as that at Rockhampton, that is to say, they would remain for years and years non-paying lines. The position of the colony is, I believe, that all well-minded men who know the country districts are prepared to back any action of the Government in legitimately pushing on a trunk line, and possibly the Southern extension. Beyond that, it is a mere scheme to damage the squatter and oppose the legitimate settlement of the land, to feed the capitalists, to part with those portions of the public estate that years hence we shall wish back again. It is a measure depreciating the colony, rushing into the sale-yard lands which we have not the capital to buy—lands which only capitalists can touch. We are damaging our public estate by the most fanatical and suicidal policy ever brought before the House. I hope this measure will not be carried, for it is impossible to foretell what the result will be. Not only is it one of the most important ever brought before the House, but the most suicidal policy ever invented by any Government.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not pretend, sir, to be gifted with that flowing eloquence that commands the applause of listening senates, as some honorable members do; at the same time, I feel it my duty to offer a few remarks, to explain the vote that I intend to give on

this question. I distinctly remember, when the Western Railway Bill of last session was introduced by yourself, sir, a very gifted member of this House, a gentleman who then worthily represented the Clermont district, brought in, as an amendment, a proposition that the colony should be divided into railway districts, and—I speak under correction—I believe that amendment received the unanimous assent of honorable members on the other side. Now, sir, what does the present measure do? It is in some respects an adoption of that principle.

Mr. PALMER: No.

Mr. MORGAN: The honorable member for Port Curtis, for whose opinion I have a great respect, says, "no," but my recollection is different. My recollection is, that it was an introduction of the thin edge of the wedge of financial separation—of the principle that every district in the colony was to be accountable for the railways that were to be constructed in each district. Nothing has occurred since to alter my opinion, and I still think it was a righteous principle to insist that the lands of every district should be accountable for the expense of its railways. If that be the right view of the thing, and that is my view, I consider that the measure now before the House is a good one. These reserves are not framed, perhaps, so methodically as they might be, but on the whole, I think the hard-and-fast lines of the compass are the best that can be drawn. If the boundaries of runs were selected, suspicious circumstances might be alleged, and there would probably be accusations of favoritism. I listened very attentively to some of the speeches, and noticed their salient points; but I must confess I was not as well informed and as much enlightened at the end as I might have been. I heard what the honorable member for Carnarvon said about Vegetable Creek, and the extension of this line from Warwick to the Border. Vegetable Creek, as far as my knowledge goes, is on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, a place where vegetables were never grown. The extension of the line to the Border would no doubt attract a great deal of the carriage of the wool from the northern parts of the New England district. I quite agree that when the line is completed, traffic of this kind will be forthcoming. But, as I said before, the principle of this Bill is good, and I hope, therefore, we shall not only pass the second reading, but pass the Bill in all its stages. The Bill is, in fact, the initiation of what I have heard the best informed members of this House, the leaders on both sides, acknowledge to be the panacea for all the evils which affect this colony, namely, financial separation. I believe thoroughly in introducing a system of railway reserves, making every district in the colony contribute to the construction and maintenance of its own line, and it is the first direct step towards financial separation. I

shall most cordially support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. FRYAR: Mr. Speaker, it has been charged against honorable members on this side of the House that they implicitly follow their leaders, that they will not furnish reasons for the votes they give, that all the talking has to come from the other side, and that on our part there is no attempt to return their arguments, or repel their accusations. I believe that these statements are to a certain extent true, and that the business of the country would have been just as well and faithfully performed if there had been a good deal less talk on either side of the House. For my own part, I plead guilty to not having occupied a great deal of the time of the House during the present session. Upon the two important questions to which on previous sessions I gave rather more than ordinary attention—those of finance and the land—I considered it advisable, on the principle that discretion is the better part of valor, to retain silence during the present session. In respect to the first question, any favorable opinions I might have were very ably advocated by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer, and the ground on the other side was fully occupied by the honorable member for Maranoa. On the land question, I was quite prepared to address the House in support of the proposed changes, but as those changes were not attacked, or at any rate attacked very feebly, they do not require any defence of mine. I consider, however, that both of these questions are very intimately connected with the one now before the House. The honorable gentleman who introduced the Bill has stated that this is part of the land policy of the Government. I have no doubt whatever that the honorable Minister for Works would not only say it is a part, but a very considerable part of the works policy of the Government, and in respect to it, I must admit that I look upon myself as occupying a somewhat anomalous position. I stand here as the sole and feeble representative of a defunct administration which ushered in the present session with a well-defined railway policy, and then incontinently expired. Now, if this Bill be a part of the land policy, and part of the railway policy of the Government, I stand, as I have said, in an anomalous position, for I have already spoken in approval of the land policy of the Government, and in disapproval of the railway policy. So that it becomes my duty to reconcile this discrepancy, or to prove it to be irreconcilable. The honorable member has likened this Bill to the thin end of the wedge; but, in my opinion, it is more like the whole wedge—a wedge which is not part of either of the policies to which I have referred, but which may be used for two purposes; it may be used either to fix them in position, or to rend asunder and drive them apart. I am not quite satisfied that the honorable the Minister

for Lands, who introduced this matter, has fairly shown us to which purpose this wedge is to be applied. From natural and other causes, I have a very strong predilection in favor of railways, and I am thoroughly satisfied that with any reasonable amount of population and trade, the construction of a railway is a work of absolute and paramount necessity. I believe, supposing the Government were possessed of ample means, or unlimited credit, or that were there no end of buyers of land at 10s. per acre, cash down, then perhaps to make a railway where there is very little population or trade, but where there is a large extent of undeveloped country, with abundance of latent resources, with a view of giving employment to thousands of those who may now be here, or who may yet cast their lot amongst us—to make a railway under such circumstances would not only be perfectly justifiable, but highly commendable. Indeed, to neglect doing so under those circumstances would be grossly culpable. It does not appear to me, however, that the premises are clearly proved. There has been no attempt to show that the Government are possessed of ample means, or unlimited credit; that hardly comes in connection with the present Bill. It is presumed that sufficient land will be sold to pay for the making of the railways; whether that be so, I am not just now in a position to say. It will, however, I think, be admitted that when the Western Railway Act of last year was before the House, it was generally acknowledged to be a tentative measure. It was the first of the kind attempted in the colony, and it was thought desirable to reserve some ten or twelve times the area of land that it was then considered necessary to sell to make this railway; and it was also considered necessary to assist the scheme with a sort of go-cart in the shape of a quarter of a million sterling from the loan fund. Now, has this scheme been proved such a tremendous success that we may safely go in for two or three times the length of railway, and four or five times the cost? It does not appear to me, sir, that we have yet obtained one iota of evidence that it has been. The honorable the Minister for Lands has not given us one scintilla of evidence that the scheme is likely to be a success; we have not had a sale of even the smallest description to show the possibility or the probability of raising the money, even as a straw might indicate the direction of the wind. At the present time we should be quite justified in expecting a very considerable amount of evidence on this point before we depart so far from the policy which was approved by a majority of this House at the commencement of the session—a policy which was agreed upon by the Ministry of the day who were in office at that time. It was understood, I believe, that that Ministry did not consider any further extension of our railway system was ad-

visable at the present time except the extension of the Southern and Western Railway to the Border. I do not know that I am divulging any State secrets, because I believe it was mentioned in the Governor's Speech that the House would be asked to consent to the extension of this railway to the Border, which it was hoped would be the means of increasing the revenue and trade of Queensland to a very considerable extent; and it is not likely that any intention existed on the part of the Government to introduce other railways at that time of which so much could not be said. It was not only known by the Governor's Speech, but it was known by other important events in the history of that administration; for it was generally understood, and I believe openly stated in this House, that the Minister for Works of that administration resigned office and his connection with the Government because of a difference of opinion between himself and his colleagues respecting the public works policy of the Government. Another honorable member of the House was found, however, without much difficulty, to occupy the position, who, it may fairly be presumed, held opinions in accordance with those of the remaining members of the Ministry; for it could hardly be supposed that a member joining a Ministry under such circumstances, would join them with views exactly similar to those of the seceding or retiring member. It can hardly be necessary to refer to "Todd's Parliamentary Government," to "Froude," or "Hallam," or "May," for musty precedents to show that this would be a condition precedent. Here, then, are three members of the Ministry, of whom it may fairly be said that they did not believe in the railway policy proposed in this measure at the commencement of the session. The opinions of the honorable the Colonial Secretary are also pretty well known on the matter. He gave expression to those opinions in this House, and also before his constituents, to the effect that it was not advisable to construct any more railways during the present session. I presume it is hardly necessary to refer either to "Hansard," or to the local papers, to prove this position, because it would be a libel on the intelligence of the House to suppose honorable members are not perfectly well acquainted with the views of this Minister on this important question, and it is very likely the honorable member himself will not deny it; so that here are four members of the Ministry who did not consider at the commencement of the present session that any further railways except that little extension to the Border would be necessary during this session. The other two members of the Ministry are the honorable the Minister for Lands in this House, and the Postmaster-General in another place, but it can hardly be necessary to show that the former gentleman gave expression to very extreme opinions at Maryborough, when before

his constituents, some year and a half or two years ago. It was then understood that he was quite willing to advocate a system of railways, diverging from Maryborough to nowhere; and a very large loan of three or four millions sterling to carry out that scheme. When before his constituents at Maryborough more recently, the scheme was somewhat modified; but still, he was a long way ahead of his colleagues in the advocacy of a railway system for the colony. Indeed, the honorable gentleman's opinions are known to be so extreme, so Quixotic, and so determined, that he would tilt at any railway project with as much confidence and as much prospect of success, as ever the Knight of Mancha tilted at a windmill. The honorable the Postmaster-General, who is not here to speak for himself, may be fairly presumed not to be committed to any set of opinions, except such as were held by his honorable colleagues at the time he joined them; but, at any rate, whatever may be the honorable gentleman's opinion on a subject of this kind, the Ministry as at present constituted, was hardly the Ministry to introduce a scheme such as this, especially during the present session. There is such a very great diversity of opinion amongst the honorable gentlemen themselves, that whatever one opinion may be held on this important question, I think I, at any rate, having in view the position that I held in the former administration, whose railway policy received the approval of this House, can hardly be presumed to agree to the policy which has been introduced by the present Ministers.

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

Mr. FRYAR : But, sir, a question arises out of this subject in connection with the public lands of the colony. The honorable the Minister for Lands has told us that this is part of the land system. We have just agreed that the land system of the colony shall be as nearly as possible the system which has hitherto prevailed with some modifications—some reductions in the quantity of land which may be selected—some abolition of the difficulties that selectors have to encounter; all the delays which occur through classification and some other little matters of that kind. Now, seeing that this is to be the case, can we afford to lock up the whole of the Burnett district—that ten million acres of land known to be the best land, the nearest to the centres of population, best fitted for small agricultural or pastoral settlement, that is now to be had in the colony? Can we afford to lock up the Carnarvon Reserve, in the southern portion of the colony—three and a half million acres—so that no tin miner in the neighborhood of Stanthorpe, or the tin mines of New South Wales, can get a selection unless he is prepared to pay cash down for the land he wants, or go into a homestead area, and be content with 640 acres, and reside on it in person? Can we afford to lock up the Peak

Downs—the Central District Reserve, which I believe contains the whole of the land in that district which is fairly fitted for the location of small agricultural population? I am not so well prepared to speak as to the general character of the Kennedy Reserve, but I presume, following the course that seems to have been followed in setting apart the reserves I have referred to, that the same course will be pursued there, that the best land will be locked up, and that, as a consequence, the land system which has been the law of the colony for the last eight years, and which has been ratified by the action of this House within the last week or two, is to be set aside, and 30,000,000 acres of the very best land in the colony is to be set apart for sale by auction. It may be said that these 30,000,000 acres, that the Darling Downs, which is entirely set apart as a homestead area by the Bill just passed through committee of this House, and the Wide Bay and Burnett district thrown into the bargain, do not constitute the whole colony, and I am aware of it; but I am strongly of opinion that these 30,000,000 acres, and those districts which are thrown in, constitute a very important part of the colony, so far as the opportunities of settling persons of small means are concerned. I am aware that the honorable the Minister for Lands may tell us, as he did on more than one occasion during the passing of the Land Bill which has just gone through this House, that the colony contains 600,000,000 acres, which is, of course, twenty times the area which it is proposed to reserve; but, sir, the ability to exaggerate is a colonial accomplishment, and the tendency to exaggerate is not confined to Ministers of the Crown. It begins with the Ministry, permeates the whole strata of society; it begins in reference to the whole colony, and goes through its minutest subdivisions, and this little statement of the honorable the Minister for Lands is simply a slight exaggeration of about forty per cent.; but that is a very small affair in comparison with the abstraction of 30,000,000 acres of the best land of the colony, the land best fitted for settlement, best fitted for general selection, and best fitted for agricultural settlement even. The abstraction of these 30,000,000 acres from these purposes is a very much more important matter than any slight error which may be made respecting the general area of the colony. This 30,000,000 acres comprises, I believe, the very best land in the colony. The Southern Extension Reserve comprises all the land which was resumed under notices issued by the late administration, and the schedules of which have now passed their legal time on the tables of the two Houses of Parliament; the land which was resumed for settlement—for selection as homesteads or as conditional selections. The Burnett Reserve includes all the land which was resumed in the same manner and for the same purposes in that locality,

after a commissioner was specially appointed and sent out to examine the country and report on the land best suited for settlement; and I have no doubt whatever that the reserves in the Central district and in the Kennedy district contain land equally suitable for settlement and for agricultural purposes. The question arises, whether we can afford to set apart those lands at the present time for sale by auction—as to whether we can afford to subvert the whole land policy of the colony for the last eight years, or whether we can afford to subvert the Land Bill of the present Ministry even, which passed its second reading, and passed through committee of this House so very lately?

HONORABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition : Hear, hear.

MR. FRYAR : For I hold that these two Bills, instead of being part and parcel of the same system, are diametrically opposed to each other.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

MR. FRYAR : That they are perfectly inconsistent. And seeing that the House has resolved that selectors may still select eight square miles of land, and has removed, as far as we know, all the hindrances and restrictions and delays which up to the present have taken place, preventing settlement on the land, and has also come to the conclusion that 5s. per acre with deferred payments is the normal value of country land, how can we come to the conclusion that the land is fairly worth 10s. per acre as the upset price? The land in the Burnett district, for instance, is not improved in any way by the proximity of the proposed railways.

HONORABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear.

MR. FRYAR : A very great deal of it is entirely apart, and will not be improved in value one iota by the construction of these railways. I would ask, therefore, whether setting this land apart at 10s. an acre cash down at auction, is at all consistent with the decision which the House has so recently come to : that the normal value of the land is only 5s. an acre?

AN HONORABLE MEMBER : No, no.

MR. FRYAR : The honorable member says, "No, no." Well, I am aware this is a question in which the Maryborough and Wide Bay and Burnett district is very considerably interested.

MR. WALSH : Hear, hear.

MR. FRYAR : But I am aware that about two years ago the members interested in that district had well-nigh persuaded the Ministry that a railway was necessary, and that the making of the railway was justifiable; and about the same time, a Select Committee of this House took evidence respecting the probable benefit which would follow from cheap tramways or railways, and came to the conclusion that a *prima facie* case was made out;—that any Government would be perfectly justified in obtaining any evidence they could in countries where the system had been

carried out, and with a view to making an early experiment in their construction, following out this idea, a sum, I think of £112,000, was put on the Estimates last year for the making of a tramway from Maryborough to Gympie, on condition that the contract should be let at a sum not exceeding £2,000 per mile. Now, with the belief strong in their minds that a railway might be made, and ought to be made to Gympie—at any rate that the traffic, if it was not then in existence, might be cultivated and developed, and that the recommendation of the committee of this House that a tramway or railway should be attempted to be constructed on a very much cheaper scale than those which have up to the present time been constructed, I think the Ministry were perfectly justified in making the attempt; because, even if the traffic did not justify the attempt, the probability of providing a very much cheaper system of constructing railways or tramways, was a matter very much to be desired for the benefit of the colony, and for the proper utilization of its funds. This scheme, however, fell through, and we now find that the lowest amount that is estimated for this Maryborough and Gympie Railway is three times the amount then considered necessary—£6,000 per mile—and that in the face of the additional, definite, reliable, and absolute information which has been acquired since that time, to the effect that one and a half passengers per day is the only passenger traffic between Maryborough and Gympie. Now we are asked to construct this so-called bogus railway in order to benefit a few property-holders at Maryborough; and I would ask, sir, whether it is advisable or right that the whole colony, and more particularly the conditional selectors of the colony, should be defrauded out of these 10,000,000 acres in the Burnett district in order to benefit a few property-holders in and around Maryborough, or in order to benefit a few other speculators in mineral land, by the construction of a railway from Bundaberg to South Moonta? My own opinion is, that the colony would receive a great deal more benefit if the land was allowed to be open according to the laws hitherto in force, and likely to continue in force for selection and settlement. I believe if the Land Bill which has just passed through committee had been allowed to pass as it was introduced—that is, fixing the price of land at ten shillings an acre, that even in railway reserves it would have been advisable to have allowed the land to be selected, to have had deferred payments, and have set it apart for railway purposes, or for the purpose of constructing local public works. This scheme of railways is one which may at some future time come in and be very useful for the colony, but is one which I cannot help thinking is made up from crude notions; one which is very ill-adjusted; and one which the Ministry can hardly have

given serious attention to. The honorable the Minister for Lands calculates that these railways will cost two and a quarter millions of money. It may be so, or they may cost double that amount; but supposing them to cost that amount, they now ask £600,000 for the commencement of these railways—a sum equal to twenty-seven per cent. of the gross estimated cost—and there is no limit in the Bill, as there was in the Western Railway Bill of last year; there is nothing to show that the demand may not be repeated next year and the following year. At any rate, if this £600,000 is granted, that will be spent, and the railways will, in some fashion or other, have to be finished; but as to the probability of enough land ever being sold to pay for the making of them, it seems to me very doubtful indeed. Why, sir, the whole of the land that has been sold in Queensland from the first settlement in Moreton Bay—from the first sale in 1842 up to the last sale or the last rents that were paid to complete purchases in 1875, a period of thirty-four years, including the sales of land in the capital, including the sales in all the seaport, river port, and inland towns of the colony; including country lands on the rivers and seaboard of the colony, and every other piece of land that could be supposed to have exceptional value—the whole of the land sold during that length of time over the whole extent of Queensland has not amounted to two millions of money, and yet the honorable the Minister for Lands cuts out nicely for two and a quarter millions. Another honorable member of this House, who has had very great parliamentary and official experience, has estimated the cost at £6,000,000, but I would be content to estimate it at half that amount, say £3,000,000. But we must bear in mind that at the very time that this £3,000,000 has to be raised from the sale of land, we expect to raise about another million from the sale of land in the Western Railway Reserve, so that here are four millions of money to raise from this source—from the country lands alone—lands which do not possess any of the advantages which the country lands on the navigable rivers and the sea-board of the colony possess. I know it may be said that half-a-million of money has been estimated for this Western Railway. £300,000 was the estimated cost, but now we find £500,000 is the estimated cost; and by the speech of the honorable the Minister for Lands that £800,000 will be required, and I think it would be a little safer to take round numbers and say a million; so that if the honorable member has any idea of getting this four millions of money within any reasonable time from the sale of land, he has certainly a great deal more faith in the wealth of the colony than I have—a great deal more than I can find any evidence to support. It is not only the sale of country land that must be looked to, but if we have to get a quarter of this

money from the sale of this land, it will certainly withdraw all the sources of revenue to which reference has been made by the honorable member for Rockhampton. The honorable member has shown that the whole revenue from the land is under £380,000, and that the interest on our debentures amounts to £346,000. Now, if the whole of the proceeds of the land is to be taken for these railways, we certainly deprive the country of one source of revenue, and so we shall have to find the means of paying the interest on our debentures in some other way; and I would ask, whether those localities which are not likely to derive any benefit from these railways, are likely to submit to such a proposition?—that is a question we may seriously ask ourselves. I have no idea whatever that the Government are likely to get anything like the amount they anticipate from the lands. There are one or two questions which crop up in connection with the measure now under discussion, one of which is, how are the wants of conditional selectors to be supplied? It has been thought fit to set apart the whole of the Darling Downs as homestead areas, and when honorable members remember the fact that the Darling Downs has neither more or less to fall back upon than Wide Bay or the Moretons have in proportion to their area, and when we remember that the Moretons have three times the proportion, and only the same quantity of land to fall back upon, we may fairly assume that the land in those other districts will require to be set apart for homestead selections. I can see no reason why the lands on the Darling Downs should be set aside for homestead selection, and the lands in the Moretons be set apart for conditional selection. It has been stated by the honorable Attorney-General, that there has been comparatively no land opened for selection, and that that is one of the reasons why there has been such an outcry. To that I can only say, that in the settled districts of Wide Bay and the Moretons, out of $13\frac{1}{2}$ millions of acres, 11 millions have either been selected, or are open to selection; so that there are only $2\frac{1}{2}$ million acres in all these districts held under pastoral lease—about one-third in each district; so that if there has been no land open for selection, where is there likely to be any?—for the quantity I have mentioned would hardly meet the requirements for a single year. Sir, it would detain the House too long to go into the effect of these sales on conditional selections, but we must bear in mind that, in 1868, half the runs were thrown open, and also all the land in the settled districts not then under pastoral lease, and yet in four years it was considered necessary, by even the most conservative party in this House, that more land should be resumed and thrown open for selection. Again, in 1872, it was considered necessary to throw open more land, and three million acres were withdrawn from lease, and

thrown open as homestead areas; and since that time the area to be selected as homestead areas has been very considerably increased, so that we may safely assume that, so far as homestead selection is concerned, the Wide Bay, Burnett, and Darling Downs districts have been fairly used up; there will be no land in these districts for conditional selection, and with the large withdrawals from conditional selection in the Burnett by the measure just passed by the House, I will ask, how the demand in the settled, or even in the unsettled districts can be supplied? The policy of the Government, as set forth in the Bill, appears to me to be the result of amalgamation of several very crude ideas. We have the persistent stagnation policy of the Colonial Secretary, the procrastinating policy of the Treasurer, the promise and palaver policy of the Premier, the probable or possible policy of the Minister for Lands, and the profound or incomprehensible policy, couched in legal phraseology, of the other two members of the Ministry, who are both lawyers who would wriggle into or out of any policy. It is a policy all jumbled up together, and one, at any rate, which does not appear to be equal to the wants of the colony; it is one which subverts, not only their own land policy, but the railway policy of a Ministry of which no less than three of their number were members, and which policy was decided by this House to be not unacceptable to it and the country. I do not think their policy is one to recommend itself to the colony, unless we are prepared to support their land policy. I am prepared to say that we are parting with our lands too cheaply, and I am not prepared to support withdrawing these million of acres from selection in order that the parties represented by the honorable Minister for Lands may be benefited at the expense of the whole of the colony. There are one or two other little matters, sir, to which I will refer, and the principal one is, that some few months ago there was a tremendous hulla-balloo kicked up because a few acres of stony ridges were offered for sale at auction, which were unfit for any other purpose, and were offered at three times the price put on this splendid land in the Burnett district, which is generally acknowledged to be the best in the colony now available for settlement; and yet, perhaps, those very honorable members who so violently declaimed against that sale will vote for the present extraordinary proposition of the Government. We may make a railway on the Downs, and pay interest on its construction out of the general land revenue of the colony; but we must give the land away on those favored Downs, and at the same time that we are doing this we are selling, as I said, the best lands in the other districts to pay the interest on that railway, and in order to construct railways in other districts. This policy may suit certain honorable members and the Ministry of

the day, but I can hardly see where my character for consistency would be if I were to support such a policy after having been a member of a Government at the commencement of the session, who introduced one very different indeed. It will be seen that it is from no political principle, from no regard to selectors or to the public interest that they desire to stop sales by auction, but that millions of areas may be sold in the Burnett district, so long as none are sold on the Darling Downs. I, however, intend to take a broader view of things, and whether I retain the friendship of the Government, whether I retain a seat in this House, or whether I retain the good opinion of my constituents, I must endeavor to retain my character for consistency, and shall not give a vote subversive of the land policy of which I have approved, and for which I have voted; neither shall I give a vote subversive of the railway policy adopted by the Government, of which I was a member, and approved of by a majority of this House.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Sir, as far as I understand the amendment which has been moved by the honorable member for Rockhampton, it carries out very much the ideas propounded by the honorable member for Maranoa in his speech on the first night of the present debate. At the time the honorable member read his amendment, I could not understand it, and as it has not been printed, all I know of it is from hearing it read by you, sir. The principle of setting aside lands for the payment of the cost of construction of railways has been affirmed by the honorable member for Maranoa, and by other honorable members opposite, and I think that the honorable member went even further, and said that no one would deny that railways not only benefited the colony to a considerable extent, but also the land through which they ran. There is no doubt that these statements cannot be denied, at any rate no honorable member opposite has denied them. The honorable gentleman also stated that the only difference between himself and the Government was as to the modes in which the land should be applied to the payment of the construction of the railways. Now, sir, I take it from the speech of the honorable member, which he made on a previous occasion when this question was before the House, that he intended that the lands should be sold, and the proceeds applied to the payment of interest on the cost of these railways. That was the honorable gentleman's intention I believe, as far as I can gather from the report of his speech in "Hansard," and as I heard it delivered.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: No, no.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, sir, I think there is no more false system than that of applying the real estate of the colony to the payment of interest on railways or any other current expenditure. There is no

doubt it has been done in this colony to a large extent since Separation, but that we should carry it out in future, I believe to be a false system altogether—we are parting, as I have said, with our real estate for the purpose of paying interest on railways constructed, and of which there is a loss in the working expenses. I think the quotation the honorable member made from the book of Professor Bonamy Price went a long way towards explaining the matter in its proper light, but I read that extract in a very different light from the honorable member. It applies, as has been stated by the honorable member for Wide Bay, to a country like Great Britain, and to the floating capital of that country. But floating capital and the real estate of a country are two very different things. There is no doubt that the honorable member for Maranoa carried it further than that, but still I do not see how he made it apply directly to the case in point. Professor Price says:—

“Nothing enriches a country like a well-planned railway; yet the construction of railways is nothing but a gigantic destruction of wealth.”

That applies so far as taking money out of industries to which it may be applied, for the construction of railways. But here, sir, we do not propose to take the money to pay for the construction out of any department, but from the sale of lands. If the honorable member applies the quotation to the sale of lands, and carries it out to its full extent, the conclusion is, that it at once asserts that no lands should be sold in the colony, because it is a gigantic destruction of wealth; but I think it does not do that. If well-planned railways, as stated by Professor Price, enrich a country—with which I may say I quite agree, as they will open up the country—and the Government only propose to deal with one-half of the lands reserved, there is no doubt that the portions remaining will be rendered equal in value to the whole of the lands resumed. That shows the fallacy of applying such a quotation as this to the case in point. If we part with some of our land, and still retain land to the full value of all which has been resumed, by carrying a railway through it, we do not destroy any part of the whole. The fact of a railway going through it increases the value of land—that, I think, will not be denied by any honorable member—and therefore there is no destruction of wealth. There is no doubt that we could get the money necessary for making these lines by borrowing it, and still retain the lands; but I should like to ask where, if the lands are sold, is the money to come from to pay the principal on the construction of the railways. The lands are all sold and applied to the payment of the interest, then what becomes of the principal, which must fall due some day? Who is to pay that? I suppose our grand-children, as

some honorable members say that the land will not be sold in our time—

Mr. BELL: What do you want to pay the principal for?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suppose it will fall due some day.

Mr. BELL: Never.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I suppose our debentures are not in perpetuity, and this money has to be repaid, or are they in perpetuity?

Mr. BELL: Of course.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: At all events the quotation the honorable member applied to this Bill is not a case in point, and I am quite sure that honorable members will see that what may apply to floating capital in a large country, will not apply to real estate in this colony. I should like to point out still further, that we are in a totally different position to the mother country in this respect, that nearly all our banking institutions, which may be considered the custodians of floating capital, are, with one exception, branches from establishments in the mother country. There is no doubt that money, like water, will find its level, and if we construct railways from the proceeds of land sales, money will find its way into this colony from other countries, not only from purchasers who buy lands along the line, but from other persons in the colony, and also in the mother country; and for such a scheme as we proposed, I have no doubt the money would be found. I should be very sorry to see the floating capital of this colony much diminished, but the honorable member for Maranoa stated in his speech that large sales of land had taken place in New South Wales—I will quote the honorable member's own words:—

“There is no colony in the whole Australian group that has better facilities for selling land, and better customers than New South Wales has; and she has been bleeding Victoria from the very first for money for her lands.”

Well, sir, if New South Wales has bled Victoria, I have no doubt that Queensland will be able to bleed both those colonies by offering her lands for sale. I will go further, and carry on the honorable member's arguments. It is only two years ago since the honorable member advocated a scheme like the present—I allude to his proposition to make a railway to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and how was that line to be paid for? Why, by alternate blocks of land. Were those blocks of land to remain in the hands of the contractors who made the line? No, there were to be provisions made for selling it. If, sir, the honorable member then advocated a scheme by which such enormous blocks of land would be required, and this scheme is brought in by the Government, who will have the best chance of putting the land into the market, how can he reconcile such a scheme as that he advocated with the opinions

he has since expressed; where is the honorable member's opposition to the present law? With regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Rockhampton, that honorable member began by saying that the Bill was opposed to the principle of the Western Railway Act, and then he attacked the Bill because it did not contain the principles of the Western Railway Act. So much for the honorable gentleman's consistency. If the honorable member opposes it on the ground that it did not contain the principles of the Western Railway Act, why did he put himself out of the way to prove that they were the same? He also objected to the principle—which, however, is more a matter of detail than of principle—that the Western Railway Act provided for reserves of 10,000 acres each, whilst in the Bill before us the area is reduced to 2,500 acres; at the same time he complained that it would interfere with settlement to a great extent. Now, sir, the object of reducing the area is to induce settlement along the line, and nothing I conceive will effect that object more than having the land in small blocks, as then the lands will not get into a few hands. There are a good many matters connected with this question which have been already answered by my honorable colleague, the Attorney-General, and other honorable members on this side, and I shall, therefore, not detain the House any longer.

MR. FRASER: I confess that after listening to such a variety of speeches, addressed to so many points of the subject, it is a somewhat difficult matter to collect one's thoughts to the real merits of the question at issue. I must at the outset comment for a moment upon the remarks made by the honorable member for Rockhampton. That honorable member has told us that opposition to the present Bill on the part of members of the Opposition side of the House is a conscientious opposition, implying that support to the Government on this side of the House cannot be equally conscientious.

MR. BUZACOTT: Oh, no.

MR. FRASER: I cannot conceive what other inference can be drawn from the remarks of the honorable member. There should be no question raised as to any honorable member in this House, that the part he takes on this or any other important question proceeds from any other than an upright and conscientious motive.

MR. BUZACOTT: Will you allow me to explain that I cast no imputation whatever on members on the other side of the House. I believe they are all actuated by conscientious motives.

MR. FRASER: Well, sir, I accept the honorable gentleman's explanation at once. At the same time, he must not, I think, blame me or any other honorable member if we draw our own inferences from statements presented to us. There is another observation I should like to make. It must be admitted, and I

think it will be admitted on all hands; that a more important question than this has not during this session come before the House, and it is a question that I take it ought to be dealt with by all honorable members of this House, apart from anything like party consideration, and so far as I am personally concerned, I shall endeavor to arrive at something like a satisfactory conclusion apart from such considerations. That the question is important is fully admitted by everyone: it is important whichever way it may be decided. If decided in the affirmative it is important, and may affect the progress and interests of the colony very materially for many years to come, and if it be in the negative, it may, on the other hand, affect the interests of the colony to an equally serious extent. Upon two or three points I believe all honorable members are agreed. In the first place, it is agreed that railways themselves are not only useful but indispensable to the progress and well-being of the colony. Whatever may have been the case in days gone by, I believe there are not two opinions upon this question at the present time. The next question upon which we are all agreed is, that the lands of the colony must ultimately pay for the construction of these railways and public works; and another important principle which has been affirmed in this House before now is that the localities which benefit by the construction of these railways and public works should bear the burden. Starting with these three acknowledged positions, we should endeavor to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion. I freely admit at once that the general position of the honorable member for Maranoa on certain parts of the question, is sound and correct. I should deeply regret if the result that he has predicted should ever follow the construction of railways or public works in the colony, and it cannot be doubted that if they are carried out as he describes, they would have a most disturbing effect upon the financial position of the colony. I am quite free to admit that if these lands were largely thrown into the market, and were to be bought up in the colony and by colonists, it would inevitably have the effect of withdrawing a large amount of capital from the occupations in which it is now employed, and to this extent and in this way it would cripple the other industries of the colony. It is assumed by those who affect to oppose the present measure, that theirs is the only way by which the question can be disposed of; that the Government are not only bound, but bent upon the throwing of large quantities of land into the market, and thus swallowing up the present floating capital absorbed in the colony. Here then is where we arrive at a point of difference and dispute. We agree up to this point—both parties. We have heard a great deal, both during this and former occasions, about the question of financial separation. It is a question of great importance in itself,

and a question the principles of which I am prepared to endorse and accept, and I cannot conceive a more effective means of initiating such a principle as that than those proposed in the present Bill. It is emphatically fixing the liabilities of the different localities for the public works that are constructed, and by which they are to be benefited, and for this reason, if for nothing else, I should be prepared to support this or a corresponding Bill. It is suggested to us that it will be ample time to initiate a policy of this kind when the Western Railway Bill has proved its advantages and soundness; but I do not know that there is any occasion to wait until that has been done. Are we to suspend the progress of public works and railways in the colony until there has been ample time to develop whether this is to be a failure or not? I might reply to that—there is no probability shown that this scheme is likely to be a failure; there is no argument advanced to suggest how it is likely to prove a failure. I would ask honorable members, in what a different position the Southern Railway would be at the present time—how deprived of all complaint the northern members would be, if this principle had been applied on the Northern Downs years ago? It would have deprived those members of a very just complaint, and a complaint which they and other members are fairly entitled to make. But this was not the case, and the railway must remain a burden upon the whole colony, which would clearly not have been the case if the principles involved in the present Bill had been acted upon years ago. We are told, also, that it had taken a number of years to sell a certain area of land, and realise a certain amount of money. Now, it must be remembered that though this may have been the case, there are many reasons to account for it; and it must also be remembered that our population is largely increasing; that the demand for the settlement of land is likely to increase also; that we are not likely to dispose of our public estate at the same slow rate as during the last nine or ten years. If the Government were likely to plunge at once into the construction of all these railways, and to expend an enormous sum of money, there might be some force in the objections raised. But let it be borne in mind that it has taken us something like twelve years to construct 300 miles of railway, and to expend something like £3,000,000 of money. Even if we go ahead much faster than that, or at double the rate, we could not expend the sum that is proposed by the Government at present in less than six or seven years; so that the expenditure of something like three or four millions sterling would occupy that time, and in course of that period, by properly dealing with the question, there can be no difficulty in realising a very considerable sum from the lands of the colony. But I would observe that I do not suppose there is the slightest intention on the part of the

Government to force the lands of the colony into the market until the value of the lands have been considerably enhanced by the construction of the railways in the localities where the lands are situated, and I think an objection has been raised to the difference that exists in the present proposal in point of detail, as compared with the Western Railway Bill. There it is pointed out that the proposed line is to pass through the reserves, whereas the present arrangement does not do so in all cases. I take it that is no serious objection to the plan so long as the lands are situated in the locality or district that is benefited by it. The honorable member for Rockhampton raised a series of objections to the present Bill, and he attempted to point out how completely it clashed with the Land Bill. He pointed out that there was no provision made for the conditional selector; but I hardly think the honorable member dealt fairly with all the provisions of the Bill. I would especially point out the fourth subsection of clause 8. The honorable gentleman told us there was no provision made for conditional selection, and that it is optional with the Minister whether he should proclaim homestead areas or not. According to this Bill, it is not optional with the Minister; it is part and parcel of the very principle of the Bill, and if the Bill passes into law, it is quite competent for any colonist to select under the homestead arrangement, in any part of the reserve; for the 4th subsection distinctly says, "Under the provisions of the law in force for the time being, relating to the selection of land in homestead areas." It does not, therefore, depend at all upon the will or option of the Minister; it is already provided for, and I was rather surprised that the honorable member had not the candor to acknowledge it. Instead of that, he distinctly told us, and the country also, that no such provision exists in the Bill. I, to a certain extent, agree with him that it would be advisable that there should be such a provision in the Bill to meet the conditional selector, and if the Bill goes into committee I will endeavor myself to introduce a clause to make that proviso, for I am sure it would be a great advantage to have it. Another assertion is that the whole of these lands are to be put up indiscriminately to auction. I do not think there is any ground at all to justify that assertion. It is true that the power exists to do this, but I do not suppose that any Minister, whichever party may be in power, would do anything of the kind. Whoever may be in power, the only object I conceive is to promote the best interests of the colony, and act according to the circumstances of every case. I think it is not fair to put this construction on the Bill, or to assume that such a thing would be done by any mistake whatever. I do not wish to trespass upon the time of the House any further. Although I may have presented my ideas somewhat

crudely, I have given briefly the reasons why I feel called upon to support the Bill. As I said before, it is settling the important principle that whenever railways are made through any locality in the colony, the lands of that locality should bear the burden of construction; and it is therefore necessary that a Bill of this sort should pass, in order to secure that there should be certain areas of land, the proceeds of which cannot be appropriated to any other purpose than ultimately to pay the cost of construction of these railways. These are the principal reasons why I feel called upon to support the Bill now before the House, and I wish it definitely to be fixed that whatever time the railways are constructed, let it be at an early or a remote date, certain lands in those localities shall be so fixed and settled that they cannot be appropriated to any other object than ultimately to pay for the construction of railways and other public works.

MR. MURPHY: I do not wish in any way to conceal the fact that I am in favor of an extensive system of railways throughout the colony; and assuming that a clause is introduced into this Bill limiting the resumptions to half the runs proposed in the plans laid upon the table, I shall be prepared to support it. It seems to me that the principle enunciated in this Bill is correct; that is to say, that the lands in the districts through which these railways pass, and which are so much benefited by their construction, should ultimately pay for them. It is a guarantee to the capitalists of the old country, or anyone else who chooses to enter into these large financial speculations, that there is an ultimate security for the payments of the moneys borrowed. The honorable member for East Moreton has, in a very able speech this evening, given his reasons for not coinciding with the principles of the Bill; but it seems to me he goes on the principle that these large reserves throughout the country, the value of which will be so materially enhanced by the construction of these railways, which if worth ten shillings an acre now, will be worth thirty or forty shillings an acre by-and-by, are to be given away indiscriminately to selectors. With this view I do not agree; it seems to me, rather, that it would be fairer to the whole community that these lands should be reserved, that a reasonable sum should be placed upon them as an upset price, and that as they increase in value from time to time the sales should be effected. Experience shows that as railways are pushed throughout the country from time to time, the alienations on each side are doubled and trebled in value; and no doubt it will be so by the construction of the lines now proposed. Whether it is advisable to proceed with all these railways simultaneously is, perhaps, a matter for discussion; but the principle itself seems to be a correct one. It will probably strike many honorable members that it is unfair to the pastoral lessees

to reserve the whole of their lands. Many pioneers have gone out and opened up the country to a large extent, and at immense cost in money and risk of life, and therefore I think it would be undesirable and unfair to resume the whole of those lands from the pastoral lessees. The principle suggested of reserving half instead of the whole, would be a fair one, and it may fairly be conceived that the half which would be left will be of much more use than the whole of the run at present, and to some extent, the lessee might be said in that case not to suffer at all, considering the increased means of communication he would have with the coast. Keeping in view, therefore, this principle of reserving one-half instead of the whole, the provision will not unfairly press upon the pastoral lessee, and if the principle were definitely embodied in the Bill, it would deserve our support. It has been said that there is no real intention of carrying these railway schemes into practical effect; that it is impossible in the nature of things for the lands to be made available; that in fact sales cannot be made sufficient to carry on the railways. But I do not see that the Government are bound to any particular time: at all events, they are not to rush these lands immediately into the market. They can stay their hands, as I take it, until these railways are partially constructed, and when they are constructed to a particular point, the Government, I suppose, will feel it their duty to submit the lands, which have been thereby so considerably enhanced in value, for sale. We may then reasonably suppose that the experience of other colonies, and the experience of Queensland itself where the railways have been pushed on—on the Darling Downs, for example, and elsewhere—will be repeated, and the land will become even quadrupled in value. We may reasonably suppose that it will be so in the districts affected by this Bill. This, at all events, I suppose, is the intention of the Government, and would be the intention of any other Government that may be in power, namely, that these lands should be sold when they have attained a certain value; the railway will be constructed for a certain distance, and as it goes on, the lands will be sold, and the advance in the public revenue meanwhile will enable a certain portion of the land, especially that abutting on the line, to be sold from time to time. The public Treasury will thus be guaranteed by the sale of lands. That is the principle enunciated by this Bill, and that is the principle for which I shall vote. The principle contended for is even favored by the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton. One of his proposals is:—

“That, pending a trial of the principle of the Western Railway Act, this House is of opinion that it would be inexpedient to at once extend the principle of that measure to other portions of Queensland, but is willing to make liberal provision on the Loan Estimates for such railways and other works as are requisite to ensure the

progress and prosperity of the colony—the cost of such works to be subsequently made a charge upon the respective districts benefiting by their construction.”

Now, the principle enunciated in the Bill seems to me to make what is here suggested an absolute truth, because it sets aside the land for the construction, and it gives a certain property that can be taken afterwards to apply to the payment of the works. But if the charges are merely to be made upon the district when the land is all alienated by conditional purchasers, who get their land for next to nothing, what will they say to the taxation? They certainly will not oppose it. The lands have passed away into the hands of others who have selected them, and there is nothing left to pay for these railways but the ordinary taxation of the country. I take it that the residents of the districts who will have to pay this taxation will scarcely like it; the lands will have passed away as they have done in other districts where the principle has been applied, and it will probably be too late. It seems to me to be a fair principle, and it seems to me that what the honorable member for Rockhampton wishes to be done is guaranteed. As to the railways, no one doubts that pushing them on throughout the colony will be a material benefit, and I for one never doubted that the construction of a railway to the Border, at all events, would be agreed to without a word of discussion in this House. I take it for granted that it is a national railway, and one that of all others should be pushed ahead with the least possible delay. Then we come to the others. The honorable member for East Moreton spoke of the line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry as being a bogus railway—a favorite expression used formerly in connection with other railways, and now revived; but from what I have read in the public prints as to the want of construction, that is anything but a bogus railway. It brings a large mineral district into communication with the coast, and enables mines to be profitably worked, which are at present necessarily lying unworkable. The favorable report from the only mine at present being worked—the Mount Perry mine, seems to me, at all events, to justify the supposition that if this railway were constructed, providing easy means of transit to the coast, it would pay to a large extent; money would be invested in the numerous copper mines of the district, and an immense number of miners and others would be employed in developing the extensive mineral resources of the Burnett district. The results sought to be obtained by this Bill are what I believe the Americans generally desire to bring about. I understand, in America, they are constantly constructing railways and bringing population into the country to push ahead public works; but here, on the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line, we have, judging from the discoveries made, an immense mineral district, which

would be developed to an extent most beneficial to the country, by being brought into communication with the coast by the construction of this railway. But irrespective of the financial resources of the country, the agricultural lands of the district are admittedly superior, and there can be no doubt whatever that those lands would pay well in an agricultural sense, were a proper means of transit between the interior and the coast brought about by the construction of these railways. The honorable member for East Moreton seems to think that the withdrawal of these lands from free selection would be detrimental to the best interests of the country; but we must look at the fact that it is necessary to push ahead our railways, and I am satisfied that the principle embodied in this Bill—that the land through which the railway shall pass shall be set aside as the security for the ultimate payment of the works—if applied to this district, must be the correct one. Taking the Burnett district, where the honorable member seems to think an immense deal of land would be settled upon and developed by the people, there is a provision in this Bill, the 8th clause, which enables the Government to deal with those lands under the laws relating to Crown lands in force for the time being. The Government are not limited to one particular way in dealing with this part of the public estate. Sales may be postponed, and the lands may be dealt with under the Mineral Land Act, under the Gold Fields Act, and under the laws in force for the time being relating to the selection of land in homestead areas; so that here we have in this Bill provision made for dealing with those lands in various ways, on the principle that the land through which the railways pass should be set apart primarily as security for the payment of the money expended on their construction. It seems to me that we should have some ultimate security for the payment of this money by the districts through which the railways pass, because, otherwise, we may have the railways made, and the lands all along the lines selected, thus returning little or nothing to the public revenue. It seems an undesirable state of things that railways should be made, and that the payment for their construction should press unduly on the inhabitants of parts of the colony, perhaps, not at all benefited by them, and that is why this principle has been, as I apprehend, embodied in this Bill. The principle on which Queensland railways shall in future be constructed is, I admit, a matter of doubt and difficulty; but having considered the question somewhat, and being anxious that railway construction should go ahead throughout the country, I think the principle embodied in this Bill is a correct one. Honorable members must recollect that, looking at what has been done in the other colonies, we are scarcely in the same position as they are. Here we have an

immense coast line, one part of the colony almost isolated from the other, no particular community of interest between them; and I take it, it would be manifestly unfair to say to the people of the Kennedy and other portions of the far North that they should be taxed or made to pay through general taxation for railways constructed down in the South, or even in the Central division of the colony. That being so, the principle that land in each district, which will be benefited by the railways, should be set apart to ultimately pay for the construction, I repeat, appears to me to be a sound one. It was the principle suggested some years ago by large capitalists of New South Wales in connection with their offer to construct a line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry. I find, on reference to the records of the House, that Mr. Vickery, of Sydney, as the representative of large capitalists, offered to construct a railway there for the purpose of opening up the Mount Perry and other mines, and affording facilities of communication with the coast, on the condition that a quantity of land on each side of the railway should be given to them. I do not know the exact particulars, but I know that was the proposal made to the Ministry of the day, of which the honorable member for Port Curtis was the head; and no doubt it was thought, if the proposals were acceded to, these capitalists would get an immense advantage by the acquisition of this land, and probably that was the reason why the Government of the day withheld their sanction from the proposals. But at any rate Mr. Vickery, representing these large capitalists, was satisfied he would get sufficient from the realisation of this land, that was asked to be conveyed, to pay for the construction of this railway; and I think, when we find that capitalists of the neighboring colony were prepared to risk the venture on a certain quantity of land being transferred to them, the principle may reasonably be considered a safe one. That was suggested when the honorable member for Port Curtis was in power, but the Government did not see their way to accept it. That was the way in which Mr. Vickery sought to bring his capital and that of those with whom he was connected to bear on the resources of this colony, and, as I apprehend, it is substantially the same principle as is embodied in this Bill. At all events the gentleman named made the proposal, and seemed to think that if it had been granted it would have paid. Now, with regard to the probable cost of these railways—a great deal has been said, and all I can state is, that I have been informed that railways in ordinary flat country where there are no great engineering difficulties to be overcome, can be made almost as cheap as macadamised roads. I have it on the authority of the present contractor for the Western Railway: I asked him if I could state it publicly, and he authorised me to do so—that railways through fair country where

there are no great engineering difficulties to be overcome, could be made for less than the cost of a good macadamised road. That being so, and keeping in view the desirability of extending railways throughout the country, keeping in view the necessity that exists, as it seems to me, to bring the vast interior of this colony into communication with the coast, I think the principle proposed in this Bill, subject to certain details which may admit of discussion and modification, is the correct one—that land in each district should be set apart as ultimate security for the payment of the cost of construction of the railways, so as to recoup the public Treasury for the money advanced. The capitalist who may lend money to the colony will then see that there is some certain security; he will not be under any suspicion that the land will be taken up by free selectors, and that ultimately the real security which capitalists look for the retirement of these large sums of money will pass away or not be available specially for that purpose. We can scarcely doubt, looking at the experience of the past, that when these railways are made the land is very materially enhanced in value, and that ultimately the sales made will be such as will partially, if not entirely, recoup the expenditure on the railways. The extent to which lands increase in value when brought into direct communication with the coast by means of railways, is almost difficult to imagine. Where there is not proper means of communication, land is scarcely of any value at all, but when a railway or some easy means of transit to the coast is provided, it increases to an almost incalculable extent; and such, I believe, would be the ultimate result of these railways being carried out. For these reasons, it seems to me the principle of this Bill, subject to minor details, which may be dealt with in committee—keeping in view the necessity for extending railways throughout the colony; keeping in view that it is railway construction which in my opinion will make Queensland what, ultimately, I hope to see her—is the correct principle; and I shall, therefore, support the second reading of this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said: I think it necessary, before coming to a division to-night, to say a few words in reference to some things which I think demand some notice from me. I must first take notice of what the honorable member for Maranoa, in his really able address, said to the House. He took exception, and I think I have some right to complain of the manner in which he did take exception, to the grounds upon which I advocated this Bill. He endeavored to persuade the House that I displayed a certain amount of insincerity in bringing forward this measure at all, and attributed to me a very lukewarm support of the Western Railway Bill of last year; or, rather, he went further than that. He said that I was not inclined to support that Bill at all; that I threw cold

water upon it, and depreciated it in every way I could; and, having done so, that I have inconsistently turned round and adopted the principle of that Bill, and endeavored to give expression to it in the measure now under the consideration of the House. Now, I think that was hardly fair; it certainly was not true. I earnestly advocated the Railway Bill of last year, not necessarily as the best railway measure that could have been brought forward, but as a measure that had received the *imprimatur* of the Government, and one likely to lead to practical results. I think, therefore, the honorable gentleman had no right to accuse me of any insincerity in connection with the advocacy of any railway policy which I had the privilege of bringing under the notice of this House. I refer him, in the first place, to what I said shortly after my election, now more than a year ago. On that occasion, I endeavored to give expression to an earnest desire to carry out a combined policy of immigration and railways, and other public works which it seemed to me the circumstances of the colony demanded. On coming to the House I found the Government had adopted a railway policy neither fair nor equitable to the different districts of the colony, and I took occasion to express my disagreement with them on that point. I thought that if they evinced a due regard to the rights of the different portions of the country, they would have brought in a measure more suited to the requirements of the colony. I gave them my hearty support in carrying through the Western Railway Bill, and the honorable member for Maranoa has no right—for there are no grounds, no justification whatever for his assertion—to say that I in any way depreciated that Bill. I gave it my cordial support on all occasions, asserting that all I desired was, that it should be applied to other districts of the colony. And I say he has no right to say I have turned round and advocated a policy now which I was not prepared to advocate then. I did advocate it, and the same resolution and earnestness which I attempted to throw into it then, I am determined to throw into this now. I of course was prepared for the amendment which has been proposed by the honorable member for Rockhampton. It was not to be expected from that honorable gentleman, who has never agreed with a railway policy identified with land grants, that he should agree with this Bill; and I will do him the credit to say that he expressed his entire dissent from the railway policy of last year, and endeavored as far as he could, I think, to divide upon it, and lost no occasion of expressing his opinion against it. He therefore is perfectly justified now in coming forward and expressing his opinion as opposed to what is simply an amplification of that measure. I take, therefore, no exception to his position to-night; and I think if he succeed in obtaining a considerable following

to-night, he will be indebted for that following, not to the small minority on the other side who do really believe in railways; but whatever members follow him in the division, many on the opposite side really do not believe in a railway policy at all.

Mr. PALMER: Who are they?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think it is very doubtful whether the honorable member for Port Curtis has any real earnest desire to embody successfully a railway policy. He has certainly given expression to a decided opposition to the carrying out of some railways.

Mr. PALMER: To seven railways at once.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has certainly expressed himself very strongly against the railway in the Burnett district; and the other day, in referring to the railway from Townsville to Charters Towers, he ridiculed the idea of such a thing taking place within the next twenty years.

Mr. PALMER: Highfields too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course that was, perhaps, a little enterprise which, I do not mean to say was of very great consequence one way or another; it is a matter involving £2,000 or £3,000, and certainly is nothing of very great magnitude. However, whenever the honorable gentleman has expressed himself decidedly in connection with railways, it has been decidedly adverse to them.

Mr. PALMER: Never.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I certainly can recall to mind many occasions. I understand he opposed the Maryborough and Gympie Railway.

Mr. PALMER: Yes; I always opposed that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have thought it my duty to advocate that, because I believe in that way we shall succeed in opening out a district which is a colony in itself, and mainly because the just claims of that district have been so completely overlooked for years past. I have felt it my duty to identify myself with a railway policy in connection with land grants, but I certainly did not initiate that principle. The honorable gentleman now in the chair, when Minister for Works, introduced that system, and having been clearly established by both Houses of Parliament, and embodied in our laws, I say it had passed the region of experiment—that it had reached actual practice. I say we were justified in extending that principle to districts which had been long neglected, and had complained of that neglect, and in my opinion, had a just right to complain. Now, sir, to illustrate the kind of support the honorable member for Rockhampton will receive to-night, what was said by the honorable member for Normanby? That honorable gentleman spoke of the Northern Railway from Rockhampton as unjustifiable in every respect; I think he spoke of it as a senseless enterprise; I took

down the honorable gentleman's words, and he said that it was a mere sop in the first instance, granted to Rockhampton, and that it had proved since to be a senseless enterprise. Now, is that the opinion of the honorable gentleman, the member for Rockhampton? I should be sorry to suppose that it is. Is it the opinion of the honorable member for Clermont, or if it is, is it the opinion of his constituents? Is it the opinion of, even, the honorable member for Maranoa, who has testified to a very decided opposition to our railway policy? When, therefore, we hear such gentlemen as the honorable member for Normanby declaring to-night that the commencement of the railway to Rockhampton was a senseless unnecessary job—

MR. DE SATGE: At the time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: At the time! Well how was that railway brought about? It was brought about by the perception of the fact that if public works were not commenced in that district, and carried out on something like a similar scale to that which had been already applied to the Southern districts, the people would not be content to continue under this Government. What was the cause of the agitation which the honorable member for Port Curtis did his best to promote? What was the origin of the strong movement for separation which was almost successful, which approached at all events something like an appearance of success, but ignoring the just claims of that district? The district was then beginning to acquire importance, and had made up its mind that if it was not recognised in the way it could be best recognised, it would seek its own fortune under its own direction. That was the origin of the Rockhampton Railway, and what are the prospects of the Rockhampton Railway now? The prospects of that railway are, I do not doubt, somewhat similar to those of the Southern and Western Railway. Will honorable members now get up on the floor of this House and say that that enterprise has not been justified by the result which we anticipate in a near future? By what means can we gain access to the rich country westward of Rockhampton, except by railway enterprise? And when we hear the honorable member for Normanby asserting that that has been a job; that when first entered upon, it was to satisfy the craving of a few agitating constituencies, then, I think, we are entitled to measure in some degree the opposition brought to bear against the Bill now before the House. It is one opposed to the real progress and the real necessities of the country, and also the just claims of the various districts of the colony. This is the support the honorable gentleman is likely to receive to-night from honorable gentlemen who so view what has been already done. Now, with regard to my honorable friend the member for East Moreton, I think I can congratulate him on having made a very effective and very closely reasoned speech. His knowledge of the land

question no doubt is considerable, and I have no doubt he has applied himself conscientiously to the subject, with the view of arriving at what he considers a fair conclusion. That conclusion, so far as he is concerned, I take it to be, that he is against this Bill, because it is opposed to what was the policy of the late Ministry in connection with land and public works. He has been good enough to attribute to me Quixotic ideas; that we were going to carry out railways on a scale larger than anything ever attempted before in this colony, and I must make this excuse, and it is an excuse which I think has been already recognised in the neighboring colonies. It is admitted, I think, on all hands, that without railway enterprise, this country cannot be developed; that there are no great rivers; and that if we are to continue bringing population into the country on such a scale as we have hitherto done, in order to afford them employment, public works must be established; and that in addition to this, in order to open out the land on which these immigrants may eventually settle, those improvements must be made. The honorable gentleman has attributed to me a Quixotic notion of making railways throughout the length and breadth of the land. I am sorry he should have done so. I do not think I am at all ahead of the times, and the Government with whom I am connected is in no way in advance of the requirements of the country at the present time. The other night, in moving the second reading of the Bill, I pointed out that at a time when the population was only 45,000 people, we commenced a railway scheme which required the formation of 188 miles of railway; and now we propose to take in hand lines which, according to our present estimate, amount to 300 or 400 miles of railway. Now, considering that fourteen years have passed; that during that period we have increased our population five times what it then was, and our resources in every respect are infinitely greater; the export of gold exceeds that of wool; tin has been discovered; large discoveries of copper and other minerals, and valuable timber have taken place; and we occupy an extent of country three times what we then occupied;—I say, taking all these matters into consideration, we are not ahead of the times, and that unless we look ahead, and provide for the future in a manner adequate to the demands of the people in the different portions of the colony, we shall fail in doing our duty. The honorable gentleman has spoken in terms of slighting indifference of the proposition of the Government to set apart something like 30,000,000 acres for the purpose of making railways, not, mind you, in one part of the colony, but in several parts; and I ask, has he any right to attribute to me this abstraction as he has been pleased to call it—this dedicating a small portion of our vast territory to such purposes? Did not he, and did not his Ministry set apart something like 20,000,000

acres for similar purposes in one portion of of the colony? Was that an abstraction or not? And I will point out this: that while proposing to set apart so large an area as 30,000,000 acres, the Government do not propose to take for the purposes described in this Bill more than one-half the runs in that area, so that here we reduce the area by one-half. Probably the actual area will be somewhat more than the half of 30,000,000 acres, because in those reserves there is a great deal of country not included in any lease; but to say it was an abstraction, was extremely unjust and unfair to the Government, who now propose to take something like 15,000,000 acres of land for the purpose of dedicating it to the construction of public works in districts who complain of having been sadly neglected. I say it is unjust, when the last Ministry actually dedicated a larger amount last year for the very purposes to which we now seek to dedicate these 15,000,000 acres, and that not in one district, but in several districts. I put it to the honorable member, has he any right to attribute to this Government an unfairness, which, if it be unfairness, they participate in a great degree with the Government of last year, of which he was a member? I object to his conclusions in that respect, and further I affirm that if we have departed from the principle set out in the Western Railway Bill of last year, that it is only in matters of detail, and not of any serious importance. It is not a matter of serious importance that 10,000 acres should be permitted to be put up for auction in one reserve, and that under the present Bill that area should be limited to 2,560 acres; that is a matter of detail. It is certainly my opinion that those areas should be put up in blocks of 2,560 acres, but that is a matter for the House to decide upon. It is a matter altogether foreign to the principle of the Bill, and one that the honorable member is perfectly entitled to remedy if he can. With regard to the other matter that he has brought as an accusation against us, that we propose to sell the whole area by auction, I say there is nothing in the Bill which justifies any such assertion. We are empowered by the Bill to set apart any area we please for homestead selection, and I hope a considerable area will be so dedicated. I am aware that certainly in the North the system of homestead selection at the present time is not very much in favor. That is my experience during the short time I have been called upon to administer the Lands Department. I find that in the North there has been no exercise of the homestead right to any great extent. The argument of the honorable member would lead us to suppose that the Government were going to sacrifice this land at auction for probably less than its value, in order to make these railways, and that thereby we are foregoing the benefits which might arise from selling it under conditional

selection; but I say there is nothing in this Bill antagonistic to the Alienation Bill which we have discussed in committee of this House. I have never asserted that we shall not be entitled to sell land otherwise than by auction. I have asserted the very reverse, and it was unfair of the honorable member for Rockhampton to accuse me of wishing to alienate any land, except by the system of auction. I have endeavored always to distinguish two modes of sale, which I think most suitable to the circumstances of the colony. So long ago as when we discussed the principle of land sales under the Act of 1868, I endeavored to express the opinion that there were two modes of sale most suited to the circumstances of this country, namely, sales under conditions such as those described in the homestead clauses, and sales by auction. Those are the two principles in that great country which we profess to imitate in the Bill which we have lately had under discussion. They are sound principles, and I should like to see them carried out in practice in this colony. I am in favor of them, and I should be deserting my principles if I said that I was in favor of large alienations which result in parting with our lands for an insufficient value. I have always said that I am in favor of homestead selection for the industrious working man and farmer, whom we invite to come to this colony; or where necessary, that we should apply to the money market and endeavor to obtain the best prices we can for the purpose of enabling us to carry out our public works. The Government propose to do nothing more than that; they propose to give full expansion to homestead selection and sales by auction. The honorable member for East Moreton, and the honorable member for Bandanba, have expressed their opinions that certain portions of the lands reserved should be open for conditional selection, and there is no doubt that they have a perfect right to entertain those opinions; but I believe that we are as honestly and as earnestly devoted to the settlement of the country as any body of men can be who are working together as a Government in this House. The honorable member for East Moreton also made some remarks about sacrificing lands in the Burnett district —

MR. FRYAR: I said nothing about sacrificing lands in the Burnett district; what I said was quite the other way; I asked, how the House could be consistently asked to put ten shillings an acre on the lands to be reserved under this Bill, whilst five shillings was put down as the value of land on the Downs?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I understood the honorable member to say that we should be giving away lands on the Burnett for ten shillings an acre, which were quite equal to the land on the Darling Downs. I do not think the honorable gentleman should assume that, because, if it is worth more, I suppose we shall be able to get it in the market; if it is not, then we shall have

to take the reduced scale. But the honorable member has no right to say that we shall take the best lands in the Burnett at ten shillings per acre, merely to please honorable members opposite with whom he appears likely to coalesce to-night for our defeat. The honorable member has a perfect right to express his opinions, but they are entirely adverse to those expressed last session by the Government of which he was a member, and I confess I am at a loss to know how the change has come over the honorable member. I should have thought, sir, that the honorable member having done the best he could to promote railways in the South, would be anxious to extend similar benefits to those derived from those railways, to other parts of the country. It is a matter of right and wrong between the North and the South. I say that we are now doing our best as far as practicable, at the present time, to redress those grievances which many people in the North very justly complain of. We cannot do more, and if honorable members opposite stay our path, if they are anxious to prevent us carrying out this policy of common justice and conciliation, then I say that the retribution will be upon them.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: No, no; Hear, hear.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I say that we are not only doing our best to allocate lands for the construction of railways in those districts which have been overlooked, but if this measure passes its second reading we are prepared to ask this House for considerable grants to carry out these works. This is not an abstraction, but it is a reality; it is a firm intention on the part of the Government to do this much, and if they fail they will fail altogether; they will carry it out or else know the reason why. Not only, Mr. Speaker, are we prepared to make these grants, but, as I have already remarked, we are prepared to ask the House to give us substantial votes in aid. It has been assumed, and I think hardly fairly, that we shall stop there; but I do not believe that we shall stop there; I believe we shall ask for more money, and I do not see why we should not. It will be no duty of this or any other Parliament to carry those works to completion, for if we put our hands to the plough, we shall certainly plough the furrow through. Is it, I ask, so alarming to contemplate the formation of 300 or 400 miles of railway within the next three or four years? It is only what all our neighbors are doing. If they are carrying out railways in Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, and if we do not follow, what will be the consequence? Why, our population will be abstracted to where those public works are being carried on. Therefore, I say, as a matter of self-preservation, we are bound to carry out an energetic and vigorous public works policy.

There is more than is imagined in this Bill; there are considerable areas of land set apart for these railways, and more than that, there is a provision enabling the Government, in order to meet their indebtedness, to ask Parliament for sufficient money, first to commence those lines, and, if necessary, to bring them to completion. I say that there are no grounds for the charges of abstraction or Quixotism, or insincerity on the part of the Government. The Government associated themselves with this measure long before the honorable member tabled his motion of want of confidence in us, and for days and weeks before that vote of want of confidence which was based upon the assumption that we were not prepared to carry out a railway policy, the Bill now before us was in the form and type in which honorable members now see it. I say that there are no grounds for accusing us of a want of sincerity, and the honorable member made a very grave mistake in his motion of want of confidence, when he charged us with not having a railway policy. The honorable member has himself been identified with a progressive railway policy, which many of his followers have not been; he was anxious to identify himself with an abstract plan, but he had not the power, as no person in the position then occupied by the honorable member could bring down any definite plan before the House or do more than testify to general principles; but the honorable member was wrong to us and to himself in tabling a vote of want of confidence before he had considered a policy which we had already considered. Whatever may be our shortcomings, there is no want of sincerity in this policy—we are anxious to give effect to it, safe effect to it—we are not, I am not, anxious—and I can speak for my honorable colleagues—to rush the country into reckless expenditure; but under the circumstances of the case, we are anxious to do what we think best for the country. If we do not adopt some such policy as this, we must stop immigration. I may say that I have always looked upon some such proposition as this as most patriotic, as assisting to bring out people from the over-populated home country, and to give them scope for improving their position. In order to do that, we must connect with it such a system as that we now propose; but if we should be overthrown to-night, I say that no other Government may be prepared to carry on that system of public works which ought to be carried out. Admitting that we have defects, that we are not what is called a strong Government, that is no reason why we should fail in our duties—that is no reason why we should not attempt to carry out our measures. If we are actuated by a sense of determination, then I say if our majorities are small, even if our party is not so compact as it is desirable it should be to carry out such a policy, we must still go on hoping that time will prove the honesty of our

intention, and will give us increased experience that will assist us to carry on the Government of the country as it should be, and to carry out public works on that liberal and progressive scale which the colony demands.

Mr. WALSH: I should not have risen, sir, to speak at this time were it not for the extraordinary lamentation we have just had delivered by the honorable gentleman, who seems afraid that his Government is on the eve of being thrown out of office. The honorable gentleman's speech was a most extraordinary appeal throughout, but the last part of it was especially so, as he admits, like a school-boy, that the Government may have made failures, but they would learn. But, sir, whilst the honorable gentleman acknowledges their failures, he asks us to rush into measures which will commit us to an expenditure which, by a blunder, may involve the country in the outlay of millions and irretrievable losses. The honorable member made such a rambling and erratic speech that I find it is almost impossible to answer it, but when he says that there is no want of sincerity of the part of his Government, then it is time to answer him, and had I the opportunity, I would go through their whole proceedings to show that from the very beginning they have been very insincere. I could show how the Government have said that they were a rest-and-cautious Government; how they have stated that large public works could not be gone on with; how they have spoken of the Treasury being in danger, and how they now warn honorable members on this side of the House to be cautious lest they check the progress of the colony by refusing to go on with public works, and how they assert that these works must be carried out or immigration at once stopped. But what is the case? Why, sir, that the policy of large public works has been forced upon them by honorable members on this side.

Mr. PECHÉY: No.

Mr. WALSH: I say it, sir, as a matter of history, and not of expression, like the honorable member for Aubigny who can hardly ever express himself except in monosyllables; I say it was a policy forced upon them by the Opposition; that they were driven into a corner and caught in a trap, and now they attempt to hoodwink the House by saying that they are the party of progress, which with them means reckless expenditure, and throwing the responsibility of checking them upon the Opposition. I might say more, but I do not mean to address myself to the Bill this evening. I shall be glad to see this amendment got rid of, so that we may discuss the Bill when we have had time to recover our senses after listening to the most extraordinary address of the honorable Minister for Lands.

The question was put—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the ques-

tion, and the House divided with the following result:—

AYES, 21.

Messrs. G. Thorn, Dickson, Douglas, Griffith, Stewart, Kingsford, McLean, Edmondstone, W. Scott, Pechey, Morgan, Groom, Murphy, Lord, Tyrel, Beattie, MacDonald, J. Thorn, Foote, Bailey, and Fraser.

NOES, 17.

Messrs. Palmer, Haly, Walsh, Thompson, Stevenson, Morehead, Bell, De Satgé, Ivory, Amhurst, J. Scott, Fryar, Macrossan, O'Sullivan, McIlwraith, Graham, and Buzacott.

Mr. WALSH moved—

That this debate be now adjourned.

Mr. PALMER said that as they had already sat beyond the usual hour, and there were several honorable members who were anxious to address the House on the Bill, he thought the Government, after the experience they had had, must be aware that they could not get to a division if the Opposition did not wish them to do so. They would have come to a division long ago upon the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton if it had not been for the supporters of the Government, who had found their tongues that evening in the most unheard-of manner. For his own part, he had not recovered from the lachrymose speech of the honorable Minister for Lands; it was very harrowing to the feelings of honorable members on his side of the House, and they must be allowed time to recover from the shock. Several honorable members of the Opposition had, at his request, refrained from speaking on the amendment, reserving their remarks for the main question after that had been disposed of; and, therefore, he thought it was only right that the debate should be adjourned so as to give those members an opportunity of expressing their opinions on the Bill.

The PREMIER said that they had already had two nights' debate on the Bill. He would also point out to the honorable member for Port Curtis that the course now pursued by the honorable member for the Warrego was totally unparalleled in parliamentary experience. He had never known an instance where, after an amendment had been negatived—an amendment of the importance of that moved by the honorable member for Rockhampton, and which amounted to a vote of want of confidence—a motion had been made by a member of the Opposition for the adjournment of the debate in order to give an opportunity for some other amendment to be brought forward. He thought the honorable member for Port Curtis should accept his defeat, and allow the second reading to go to a division at once. There would be plenty of opportunities to go into the details of the measure when it was in committee. He should oppose any further adjournment of the debate.

Mr. BUZACOTT said, in regard to the remarks of the Premier, that he was bound to state that before moving the amendment that evening he had not consulted any member of his side of the House. He had moved it entirely on his own responsibility and without concert, so that the honorable member at the head of the Opposition was no more responsible for it than the honorable Premier himself was. He was sorry that some honorable members opposite, who cordially approved of the amendment, had not been able to see their way clear to support it.

Mr. HALY hoped the Premier would recall his decision. He, himself, was about to speak on the subject, but was advised to let the amendment go to a division first. He intended to speak on the main question, but should not do so to-night. The best thing the Premier could do was to give way with a good grace; such a course would advance the business of the country far more than an obstinate determination to force members to a division when they were determined not to have it. He had often seen four or five nights' debate on an important question, and upon such a wild insane scheme as this, there ought to be every opportunity for debate. There had been many insane laws; there had been laws that had reduced the agricultural returns to almost *nil*, such as cotton and sugar, the latter of which had been reduced one-half. The sheep of the colony instead of increasing had decreased, so that where they ought to have fourteen millions, they had now only seven millions; and yet, with all this experience, the Government wished to rush them into a system that would actually ruin the country.

Mr. MACROSSAN said, from the peculiar position in which he was placed, he trusted the Premier would have the debate adjourned.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Make your speech now; you have plenty of time.

Mr. MACROSSAN said no doubt he might do so, and, perhaps, he might speak on till to-morrow morning, but the subject was too important for him to speak without being reported. From the position he took at the beginning of the session, he might, he thought, claim the credit of giving the occupants of the Treasury benches their railway policy. He was as strong an advocate of railways as any in the House. He represented a district which was supposed to be included in the scheme before the House; and he was bound to give his reasons for not voting for that scheme. At half-past seven, the honorable member for Rockhampton proposed his amendment, and since then, the members on the other side of the House had spoken against time. He, himself, refrained from speaking, in order to come to a division on the amendment, but honorable gentlemen opposite had not made their arrangements with several doubtful members, and one by one they spoke against it. He now demanded

the right to be heard and the right to be reported, and he hoped the honorable the Premier would allow him that privilege.

Mr. BELL trusted the Government were not about to attempt to over-ride a willing horse. They had a majority in the last division, and ought to be satisfied with their night's work.

Mr. FOOTE: No.

Mr. BELL said the honorable member who shouted "no" from his recumbent position on the cross-benches could not have properly considered the question. It was not within the standing rules of the House that an honorable member should lie at full length on the benches and shout "no." He (Mr. Bell) appealed to the honorable the Speaker to settle this question.

The SPEAKER: I may tell the honorable member that the House has always allowed considerable latitude to honorable members in this respect.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think, sir, it is longitude in this case.

Mr. BELL said the Premier had asked the leader of the Opposition to accept his licking and be satisfied. If the Premier thought those were the terms upon which the Opposition were to be dealt with, and this was the language proper to apply to them, he was very much mistaken. The honorable gentleman evidently did not know the course he ought to adopt as leader of the House, or as a member likely to manage a strong Opposition. He (Mr. Bell) was satisfied that if the Government attempted to force the debate, they would only embitter for the remainder of the session that which had been in the minds and intention of the Opposition a desire to assist fairly those measures that were best for the interests of the country. It was the duty of the Government to show that they were capable of managing the House, and now was their opportunity. It was no use for the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to get up and say that because the Opposition had been "licked," they must tamely submit to whatever the Government choose to thrust upon them. Honorable members on the Treasury bench must be well aware that if they threatened the Opposition in this way, the business of the session would be curtailed to such a degree that it would eventually bring back to the Treasury benches the adverse opinions of the country. It was quite surprising to observe the buoyant and jubilant manner in which the Premier told the leader of the Opposition how he was to accept his defeat. In his (Mr. Bell's) opinion, those words of the Premier were not likely to be accepted. He hoped it was not the intention of the Government to attempt to stifle debate upon this important question, because there were honorable members on the Opposition benches who had speeches to make, and it was the intention of the Opposition to insist that those speeches should be heard by the House and the country.

Mr. STEVENSON said it was hardly necessary for the honorable member for Dalby to have wasted so much time on the Premier, who, it was well known, talked nothing but nonsense, and was afraid to open his mouth in debate. The Premier had better take the wholesome advice that had been given him, and save time by adjourning the debate. The Bill before the House very much affected his constituents, and he intended to speak, and be reported if he could.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said that after the excessively impertinent speech just delivered, he trusted the Premier would show that he was now at the head of a party who would adhere to him, and if they stopped till three o'clock in the afternoon he hoped the Government would not alter their decision. The Railway Reserves Bill had already occupied the attention of the House two whole days, and every member had had a fair opportunity of expressing his opinions. Not many minutes since, an honorable member on the other side accused the supporters of the Government of talking against time. Where was the truth of this? Another honorable member had dared to suggest that members on the Government side were pretending to do that which they had no honest intention of carrying out. If he (Mr. Edmondstone) suspected for a moment that there was even the shadow of a pretence for such an insinuation, he would instantly go to the Opposition side of the House. He trusted this adjournment would not be pressed, for the question had had sufficient consideration; it was now close upon eleven o'clock at night, and good time for the evening's business to cease.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he differed from the honorable member who had just sat down, and was of opinion that the question had not been at all well debated. Mean as he knew the present Ministry to be, they could hardly be mean enough to gag a debate like this. It was an attempt that would be hopeless, for there were honorable members on that side of the House who were seasoned to these lengthy debates, and there were other gentlemen who were anxious to gain their spurs in the same cause. The Premier had better yield with a good grace, for he would have to give in, as he always did.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government had not attempted to coerce the House or any party in it. Honorable members opposite must admit that they had had a fair opportunity of saying what they had to say, and even now had it. The honorable member for Kennedy knew he would be carefully reported in "Hansard," and as far as they were concerned it was after all the House and not the public to whom he would appeal, and there was ample time for him to do so before they adjourned. He (the Minister for Lands) had understood that honorable members opposite were only too anxious to go to a division, and the debate might very well

go on for another couple of hours, and finish before adjournment. He might point out to the honorable member for Port Curtis that the Government hoped to take the Land Bill to-morrow for recommitment, and it would delay the business of the country considerably if that was not done. He was most anxious that the Land Bill should be recommitted and sent to the Upper House to-morrow. There could be only one or two members who desired to speak, and he sincerely hoped the debate would, at once, be allowed to proceed.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was very sorry to find such an old soldier as the Minister for Lands carried away by his young leader into supporting him in his attempt to force the House to a division. The Premier knew as well as any one that when an Opposition had made up its mind to a matter of this kind, it was always the wisest thing to concede the point at once. He repudiated the assertion that the Opposition was a factious one; the moment the Opposition became factious he would leave it. He believed in a strong and determined Opposition, but not in a factious one. Many of the constituents of members on his side of the House lived a long way off, and did not read "Hansard," and if it should so happen that any attempts were made with those notorious wires, it was very necessary that honorable members, as a matter of justice, should be allowed to speak at a time when they could be properly reported. All that was done in the House should be above-board, and open to the public. The members of the Opposition had been accused of talking against time, but the fact was the other way. But this he could say, that honorable members on that side of the House were determined to come to a division on the amendment about half-past seven, and he therefore purposely refrained from speaking; but since that determination had been come to, several members on the Government side of the House had spoken. There was no wish on the part of the Opposition to obstruct the business of the House, and if the Ministry would take a little friendly advice, they would at once consent to the adjournment. He could assure them that if they did, they would materially advance the business of the House.

Mr. AMHURST said he had not yet spoken to the main question, but he intended to do so, and, with a view to the advancement of the business of the country, he seriously advised the Government to pause before they attempted to press the question further at present. He thought after the division that had been taken, which had been in their favor—and he need not say how sorry he was that it had been in their favor—they might reasonably consent to the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. IVORY moved—

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. WALSH said he thought there had been a most unfortunate piece of interference on the part of the honorable the Premier when he got up to object to the motion, which he (Mr. Walsh) thought was strictly in accordance with parliamentary usage, that the debate should be adjourned. Honorable members on that side of the House had endeavored throughout the session to carry on the business of the country, and he unhesitatingly said that one-half the delay that had taken place had been not only provoked, but actually caused by the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches, aided by the honorable the Attorney-General. He objected that the course of the debate, which had been an able one, should be obstructed by the conduct of the Government this evening. He had moved the adjournment of the debate in perfect good faith, and he never dreamt that the Government, because they had a majority to support them which he believed would last during the session, would so far forget how the business of the House should be conducted as to oppose it. He did not hesitate to say that fewer members had addressed the House on this most important question than on the occasion of any previous debate that had ever occurred in Queensland on a subject so important. The whole time of the two sittings that had been devoted to this debate had been under nine hours, and the whole number of members who had addressed themselves to the second reading of the Bill was eight; only eight out of forty-two members had addressed themselves to the main question, and only nine hours had been devoted to it, and yet they had been told by Ministers, cheered on by their supporters, that enough time had been given to the discussion of this most important Bill. Several members most interested in the question had not had time to speak upon it. He, himself, should have done so had he had an opportunity, and other honorable members were in the same position. Why, even the Premier of the colony had not yet expressed his opinion on this Bill; and he seemed anxious to hurry it through the second reading without doing so, and they should probably be told in a short time, as they had been before by members of one Ministry who had previously been members of another Ministry, "They were not my opinions; it was not my Bill," and so on. He maintained that honorable members on both sides of the House had a duty to perform to the country, and that they should not sit there as silent members and acquiesce in this dumb mode of proceeding. If they were to take the course of action that had been pursued with regard to some of the most important measures of the Government, what did it amount to? That every member on the Government side of the House was ready to join in a conspiracy. Caucuses were held on every important measure the Government brought forward, and probably before their supporters had ever read those Bills, or

had expressed an opinion upon them, their adherence to them was not only secured, but they were commanded to be silent on the subject in that House. He said the majority of Parliament seemed to amount to a conspiracy; the thing was a foregone conclusion before it was brought into that House. They were told tacitly, if not openly, that discussion was not intended, and the government of the country was carried on in a dumb way by those members who had agreed to support the Government in their policy; they gave no reasons for the faith that was in them. There was another reason in addition to those he had stated why the Government should reconsider their decision with regard to this question, and that was, that if the feelings of the honorable the Speaker were consulted, he would say he had had enough of the debate for this night. It was unfair; it was practising cruelty to that honorable gentleman, who, it was well known, was not in that robust health he once was, to continue the debate.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said: I wish to say a few words, and it is nothing the honorable member for Warrego has said that has induced me to speak. I wish to say a few plain words to explain the true reason why asking for the adjournment this evening is a very unusual and extraordinary and unfair proceeding. It was well known this evening that a division was desired on the main question by both sides of the House. It was also well known that about half-past seven or eight o'clock, that two gentlemen who usually vote with the Government were absent from illness, and two others were temporarily absent, and were expected to be back in a short time. An attempt was then made—and we saw plainly enough what was going on—if possible, to snatch a division on the main question before they could return to their places. That, undoubtedly, was the reason why there was no debate on the other side of the House. Honorable members on that side might have taken advantage of the whole evening for debate, but they individually and collectively refused to debate, because they hoped to get a division while two members who usually support the Government were temporarily absent for a short time. Now, when they absolutely refused to debate the question—when a trick was endeavored to be played on the Government—when they deliberately abandoned their right to speak—I say it is unfair to come forward and ask for an adjournment to enable them to make speeches which they did not intend to make—which they did not desire to make. I think, had the request been made under any other circumstances, it would have been a fair one, and would probably have been granted; but after the debate had closed, I may say, by direction of the members opposite, the application for an adjournment was so unusual, that the Government is justified in not acceding to it. I do not make these

statements in the hope of being reported, but I think it just as well that the plain truth should be told sometimes, whether reported or not.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the honorable the Attorney-General had taken advantage of the motion for the adjournment of the House to give his statement of the proceedings to-night, and he stated that honorable members on the Opposition side of the House had refused to speak. Now, he (Mr. Macrossan) was prepared to speak at any time from the moment he entered the House that evening, but members had risen to speak so quickly one after another that he had not an opportunity of doing so, and he was confident honorable members would take his word as soon as that of the Attorney-General. As to the desire on the part of honorable members to be reported, he thought it was unfair for the honorable the Attorney-General to say that any member of that House who wished to be reported did not wish to be reported. Now, he (Mr. Macrossan) wished to be reported, and he knew the honorable the Attorney-General would find means to answer what he had got to say on the question, because he (Mr. Macrossan) meant to speak on it. The honorable the Minister for Lands was the only member on the other side of the House who had said anything worth answering, and he was the gentleman he (Mr. Macrossan) meant to answer; and if he said anything the members of the Government could answer, they knew very well what means to take to answer him. The honorable member for the Warrego had stated that only eight members had spoken on the main question, and a good many must have spoken on the amendment, and there were a great many more who had a right to speak and who were entitled to be reported as well as others; and there were many on the other side of the House who ought to speak. There had never been a question brought before the House, since he had been in it, so important as this, and there had never been a question on which members were more entitled to express their opinions. If they looked at the matter in the light of comparison, what would be thought of a question of this kind in the English House of Commons? This Bill was one which professed to dispose of the public lands of the colony, and to entail an expenditure, according to the estimate of the Government, of two and a quarter millions of money, just the amount of two years' revenue of this colony. Now, supposing a question of equal importance, comparatively, were introduced into the English House of Commons—a question disposing of two years' revenue of the empire of Great Britain, amounting to about one hundred and forty millions of money—would not every member of that House who was in the habit of speaking, speak at some length; and was it likely that the debate on a question of such importance would be decided in eight or nine hours? And was it reasonable to

expect that a question of so much importance as this could be decided in so short a time? And it could be looked at in another light. This was a question involving an expenditure of £12 or £14 per head of the population of the colony, and, at the same rate, it would amount to two or three hundred millions in Great Britain. Now, even although the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches might not like to be compelled to accept an adjournment, he thought they ought to know from long experience in that House, that whenever the temper of the House got up—whenever the Opposition were determined on an adjournment, especially when a certain thing was to be done—the Opposition were sure to succeed. It was one of the privileges given to representative institutions, that the minority had a right to prevent certain things being done hostile to or against their will; and it was one of the privileges they inherited from their ancestors who established the rights and privileges of the Commons of England. He denied that there was any trick intended, as had been stated by the honorable the Attorney-General. No party on that side of the House had conspired to do any trick—but what had occurred amounted simply to this: It was intended that a division should be come to on the amendment, and the debate on the main question should be resumed immediately after, and he was prepared to speak on the main question as soon as a decision on the amendment had been arrived at; and he hoped the Government would reconsider their decision and consent to the adjournment, and allow honorable members on both sides of the House to get to their beds. He pointed out that the honorable member for Toowoomba, who always took great interest in the land question and was an authority on that question, and the honorable member for South Brisbane, and other honorable members whose opinions on this question ought to be heard, had not spoken; and neither the honorable the Premier nor the honorable the Treasurer had yet spoken. Other honorable members who were deeply interested in the question of railway extension had not yet had an opportunity of addressing the House. He was highly interested in the railway from Townsville to Charters Towers, and should have something to say on that, and would be able to throw some light upon that particular line and that particular reserve when he spoke on the main question. They would also hear something about the other railways. They had heard nothing from the honorable the Minister for Lands about the Maryborough and Gympie and Bundaberg and Mount Perry lines. He must say he was delighted with the statistics which the honorable member for Carnarvon brought before the House to prove the justice of his claim to the construction of a railway from Warwick to the Border. He considered that the statistics which had been furnished by the honorable member were enough to convince any honorable mem-

ber of the justice of the claim of that district to have a railway made; but the honorable member for Aubigny never once in his speech made any reference whatever to the railway in which he was so much interested, namely, from Highfields to Toowoomba. That must surely have been an oversight of the honorable member, who ought, therefore, to be very glad to have an opportunity offered to him by the amendment, of raising his voice upon that as well as upon other matters. He, himself, knew nothing about that railway, beyond believing that there was a place called Highfields, where there was a settlement, and some forest reserves; also, that the timber there was valuable, and that if a railway was made it might be the means of conveying that timber to Toowoomba; he should be delighted to have every information to aid him in supporting the proposition for making that line. As regarded the other lines, he had heard nothing to alter the opinions he had entertained respecting them—his objection to them had been the proposed mode of construction, and the way in which the money was to be got; but he was not in the same position as regarded the Highfields line, and as no doubt the honorable member for Aubigny was anxious to give every information, he thought the honorable member should insist upon the Government having the debate adjourned.

Mr. GROOM thought if some compromise could be come to in this matter a considerable amount of valuable time might be saved. It was now half-past twelve o'clock, and if they sat until three o'clock that afternoon, the whole of the remainder of the week would be lost; because he could speak from experience, that after members had sat up all night they were utterly unfit to proceed with the business of the country next day. He thought an agreement might be come to between the leaders of the House that the recommittal of the Land Bill should be taken tomorrow, and that the debate on the Railway Reserves Bill would be resumed after that. By that means they would save time and advance the business of the country.

Mr. PECHEY thought that now was the time when those honorable members who agreed with the policy of the Ministry should assert themselves, and argued that they were entitled to know from the leader of the Opposition what course of action honorable members opposite intended to take with regard to this question of railway extension.

Mr. WALSH called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. MACROSSAN appealed to the honorable the Premier if he were determined to maintain the position he had taken up to night, which was delaying the business of the country, keeping honorable members from their beds, and keeping the honorable the Speaker, in his present state of health, sitting in the chair, which was worst of all. He had no

doubt that if the honorable the Minister for Lands were just to whisper a few words to the honorable the Premier, in his usual conciliatory tone, he would succumb at once, and come to a compromise with the leader of the Opposition. Though he had great respect for the honorable the Premier individually, and that honorable gentleman knew it, for ever since he had been in the House they had been the best friends, he was sorry that that honorable gentleman had ever attempted to kick the ball that was put at his foot when he had the chance. He thought it would be far more to the credit of the colony, and certainly much more to the credit of the party to whom he (Mr. Macrossan) once belonged, if another honorable gentleman, whom he should not mention, had kicked the ball instead of the Premier, and had the Premier retained the position he occupied in the previous Ministry, they would not be there to-night. He believed the whole business of the country would have been done long since, and they would have been able to retire not to their beds, but to their homes. And he thought conscientiously it was not too late now for the honorable the Premier to retire from the undignified position—undignified because he occupied it, for the position itself was not undignified—he occupied and reconstruct his Ministry on a proper basis. He (Mr. Macrossan) said the honorable gentleman ought to do so, and the country would approve of his abdication of the office he held, and of some other member of the Ministry more capable of occupying the position, taking charge of the affairs of the country. The honorable the Premier had frequently asserted that the country was with him, but he (Mr. Macrossan) did not believe there was one-tenth of the country with him. In the position he occupied, the people were the best judges of the position, and they knew that the honorable the Premier should not be Premier, but Postmaster-General, and if he had been satisfied with that, it would have been better for his own reputation, and for the interests of the country at large. He (Mr. Macrossan) did not wish to occupy the position of flagellator, but he sometimes felt ashamed as a member of that House, and as a member of society, to see this important and flourishing young colony in the hands of a gentleman who did not know how to handle it; and who did not know how to fill the position the Premier of the colony ought to fill.

The PREMIER said he was always most anxious to facilitate the business of the country, and when at an earlier hour that evening he, to use the phrase, had put his foot down against the adjournment of the debate he was under the impression that all the supporters of the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton were inclined to sit it out. The Government were very anxious to get on with the Land Bill on the next day; and he should like to know,

therefore, whether honorable members opposite would be prepared to go on with that Bill first, and then finish the debate on the Bill before them. He was entirely in the hands of the House; but he had understood from some honorable members on the Government side of the House that they were anxious that the Railway Reserves Bill should be settled that night once and for all. As he had stated before, it was unprecedented in the history of Parliament that, after a substantial amendment on a Bill had been negatived, a motion for adjournment should be moved. He knew that some of his supporters were anxious to go home, and others were ill; but he should not like them to be restrained from carrying out their wishes of coming to a division that evening by any yielding on his part. He should like to know from the honorable member for Port Curtis what he would do on the next day—whether he would keep his party in check, and consent to take the Land Bill first and the debate on the Railway Reserves Bill afterwards?

Mr. GROOM said that when, at an earlier period of the evening, he had mentioned to the honorable member for Port Curtis that it had been suggested that they should adjourn the debate until the next day, with the understanding that the Land Bill should be taken first, he had done so at the instance of some honorable members on the Government side of the House. He confessed that he should like to have an opportunity of expressing his opinions on the Bill, and he had no doubt that honorable members opposite would like to do the same, and that was why it had been proposed to sit it out. But the question was whether, if they continued to sit till the next afternoon, the public business would be expedited in any way, or whether the Government would be in a better position. He thought not, and that it would be better to do, as had been proposed, namely, to take the Land Bill on the next evening first, and having finished it, to go on with the debate on the Bill now before them. He believed the honorable member for Port Curtis had been asked if he would promise to come to a division on the next evening; but he did not see how the honorable member could give any such pledge.

Mr. PALMER said he was unfortunate enough not to be present to hear what he was sure were the usual lucid remarks of the Premier. He might say that two members of the Ministry had said to him exactly what the honorable member for Toowoomba had stated, and he had expressed his willingness to come to some arrangement; but he could not give a pledge to come to a division on the following day, as he would not promise what he might not be able to carry out. But the real obstacle in the way of a proper understanding not having been arrived at long ago was the obstinate stupidity of the Premier, who had endeavored to show that he was the

leader of the Government; and although he might be the leader of the Government in obstinacy, it was the only thing he was leader in. There had been no necessity for keeping honorable members up to that late hour, because it had always been shown that where an Opposition was determined, it would not yield; they had shown the Ministry the same thing already during the present session, and, therefore, the last few hours' discussion had been a mere waste of time. It could not be said that the delay had been caused by the Opposition; it was the obstinacy of the Premier alone which had caused it, and it was his obstinacy which was likely to delay the business of the country for the rest of the week. If that was the way the honorable gentleman wished to show he was Premier, he wished him joy of it. It was not too late to adjourn, but he feared that all prospect of doing any more business that week was lost. There would have been no objection to the recommittal of the Land Bill on the next day, and nothing would have prevented them going on with the Railway Reserves Bill afterwards, excepting that the Government refused to do so; they could have done so and there would not have been a word of objection to it. It had been patent to every one in the House what had stopped the business that evening.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that, after the conciliatory speech of the Premier, and the equally conciliatory speech of honorable member for Toowoomba, he must say that he was considerably surprised at the way in which they had been met by the honorable member for Port Curtis, who got up and told the leader of that House that it was nothing but his stupid obstinacy that had caused all the delay. He did not think such remarks had been justified by anything which had been said by the honorable member at the head of the Government. The honorable member for Port Curtis had been pleased to lecture the Premier; but there had not been that night a more humiliating exhibition of bad manners than that which they had just had from the honorable member himself. There was no reason why the Premier should have been lectured in such a manner, whatever his faults might be. After all, the obstinate stupidity which was attributed to the Premier was not attributable to him, but to the party by which he was supported, as that party was anxious to proceed with the Bill; and, as there was a marked majority in favor of it, to press it to a division that evening. The undue prolongation of the debate warranted them in asking for a decision to-night upon the question. It was the desire of the Government to proceed with the business of the country; this measure and the Land Bill were the most important subjects before the country. He should prefer to take the adjourned debate at once: as it might involve the fate of the Ministry, it should be decided as soon as possible. For himself, he did not

hesitate to say that the Government would not be fit to hold office unless they could carry the Bill.

Mr. BELL said the Minister for Lands objected to the terms applied to the Premier, because they were not complimentary; it would have been much better if the honorable gentleman could have said that they were not true. Three-fourths of the members on his side were satisfied that it was nothing but obstinacy that obliged a set of public men to sit there like a parcel of children; it was through the obstinacy and caprice of the Premier. It was a childish mode of interrupting the harmony—the comparative harmony—of people who were really anxious to carry on the business of the colony. The Government were mistaken if they supposed they were going to silence a strong minority.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he might inform the House that what had been done was through no fault of the Premier's. The time that had been occupied by the honorable member for Kennedy might have been better occupied by him in making his promised speech. The Premier had merely taken up his present position at the wish of several honorable members on his own side of the House; and, if it was the wish of the majority, they were prepared to sit on till three o'clock in the afternoon.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was unprecedented in parliamentary annals that a Bill which involved so many extraordinary financial changes should be passed by the House without a single word from the Treasurer of the colony. Only to-day, a leading article in the *Courier* said that neither the Press nor Parliament had given sufficient attention to a measure which aimed at revolutionising the financial system of the colony; and it would be an indelible stain upon the honorable gentleman's character as Treasurer if he allowed the Bill to pass without giving the House his views upon the financial bearing of the subject. He (Mr. McIlwraith) could see from the Press that the principles of the Bill were not understood, and he doubted whether they were fully understood by the House and the Government. What, however, he wished to say at the present time was, that the two most important members of the Ministry—the Premier and Colonial Treasurer—had not spoken upon the main question. The more it was discussed the weaker the Bill would appear to be; and, if it were hastily passed, it might possibly happen that it would be understood when it was too late.

Motion, for adjournment of the House, withdrawn, by leave.

The PREMIER said he had no objection to the adjournment of the debate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I beg to move that the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for a later hour this day.

Mr. WALSH said he was to resume the debate, and he begged to say he should be physically unable.

Mr. MOREHEAD, agreeing with the honorable member for Warrego, said the debate ought to be adjourned till Tuesday next.

Mr. HALY supported this view.

Mr. AMHURST said he intended to speak on this question, and after the time that had been wasted to-night, he should not speak to-morrow, and it was useless for the Government to attempt to force it on, because by so doing they would not advance the business of the country in the slightest degree.

Question—That the resumption of the debate stand an Order of the Day for a later hour of the day—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said he and his colleagues had been under the impression that all honorable members on that side of the House were desirous of finishing the debate this evening; that was the information he had received, and with that object he objected to the adjournment of the debate. He had no wish to sit up later than half-past ten o'clock, but as he understood it was the desire of honorable members on that side to come to a division, he obeyed, being anxious to see the Bill through. He begged to move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he would like to point out the utterly puerile folly of the course that had been pursued by the Government to-night. They had been kept there hour after hour, doing absolutely nothing since ten o'clock. What had been the course of action all through? At about seven o'clock, honorable members on that side of the House were prepared to come to a division, but the Government would not do so, and kept talking against time, until honorable members on that side saw what the attempt was. It was the most humiliating sight he had ever seen. The Premier said he would not give way, that he would sit all night and show what he could do, but he now showed his white waistcoat and the white feather.

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned accordingly.