

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 10 OCTOBER 1876**

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## ERRATA.

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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, 10 October, 1876.*Adjournment.—Petition.—Order of Business.—Railway  
Reserves Bill.

## ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. PALMER asked the honorable the Minister for Works, without notice, whether he had called upon the Colonial Architect to take some steps with regard to the ventilation

of the chamber? The matter was referred to some weeks ago, and the honorable member promised that the matter should be attended to, but nothing had been done since, and the ventilation was so defective as to render it oppressive to a degree that was felt by many honorable members. He wished to know whether anything was to be done before the session closed, because if something was not done before it closed, they would come back to just the same thing next year.

The PREMIER said, in answer to the honorable member, he had to state that he had not yet called the attention of the Colonial Architect to the matter, that gentleman being absent from the colony on important business, but on his return he would instruct him to attend to it at once and to the damage that had been caused to the lower story of the building by springs. He might observe, at the same time, that this was a very unseasonable period of the year for the House to sit. They ought to have been out of session long ago; and the proper time to sit was during the winter months and not during summer. They jumped from winter to summer so quickly that, unfortunately, there was very little spring in Queensland.

Mr. IVORY said he did not know whose duty it was to attend to the ventilation of the chamber—

The SPEAKER: I must inform the honorable member that there is no question before the House. The honorable member for Port Curtis asked a question, which has been answered, and no debate can take place upon it.

Mr. IVORY said he should conclude with a motion.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member cannot, by moving the adjournment of the House, discuss the question.

Mr. IVORY said he did not say what he was going to do; he said he would conclude with a motion. He should like to know who was responsible for the manner in which the doors and windows of the chamber were opened and closed. On some occasions the chamber was cool enough, but every window and door was now shut, and in a very short time it would become oppressive; people then got warm and perspired, and of course if a window was opened they directly felt a draught. He thought if it were some one's duty to attend to these matters, and see that the chamber was kept at a reasonable temperature, they would then be far more comfortable. He could assure honorable members that last night when he came into the chamber once or twice, it was so extremely oppressive that he could not remain in his seat, and he spent the rest of the evening in the library. If it was at all a hot day and every window closed, it stood to reason that they would be almost suffocated. He begged to move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. WALSH said he would avail himself of this opportunity to call the attention of honorable members to a return which had been laid on the table in answer to an order of that House; and the honorable the Speaker especially, and honorable members generally, should consider, seriously, whether the Government were justified in placing such a return on the table when the House commanded that certain information should be furnished. He had never in all his parliamentary experience seen such neglect—such a refusal almost—to lay returns on the table of the House as had been exhibited by the Government during the present session. He had never seen such meagre returns—such evasive returns laid before the House as had been perpetrated, he did not hesitate to say, by the Government during the present session.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Last session.

Mr. WALSH said he made no difference between last session and this. The same jugglery in the way of conducting the public business had been carried on, and he saw the same honorable members, to his mind, occupying the same position and doing the same thing. He held in his hand the return to an order of that House which was as explicit almost as it could be, and he should read it:—

“Return to an Order made by the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, dated 27th September, 1876, that there be laid upon the table of this House,—

“Copies of all correspondence between the present Agent-General and the Government, or between the Government and other persons, respecting the security to be entered into by the said Agent-General, as required by ‘*The Immigration Act*.’”

And what had they got? They had got nothing or less than nothing. The most vital part of the return was withheld. Where was the security? They had not got anything or the sort. They had got the meagre announcement from Mr. Macalister that “Mein takes bond to Brisbane”; and where had the copy of that gone? The very thing the House ordered the Government to produce had not been produced. They did not want to know that Mr. Massie had written a rigmarole of a thing on the 11th of August, or that the Premier, on the 28th of June, sent a telegram, in very bad English, to the Agent-General in Sydney; but what they did want to see was the security offered by the Agent-General, and that had been left out. He for one, if he were left alone, which he trusted he should not be in that chamber, would not submit to such returns as these. He thought it his duty to call attention to the manner in which the House was being treated by this Government in connection with returns. They never got a return that was in accordance with the orders of the House; every return was evasive, and shuffling, and misleading. He

remembered the time when the Brisbane Parliament had so much spirit within itself that if it had received a return of this kind, the representatives of the people, or the majority of them, would have absolutely refused to go on with any more business until a proper return was furnished, and no one would be louder in his declarations on the subject, or more strong in his determination, than the honorable the Minister for Lands. Such conduct as this on the part of the Government would lead to delay in the public business; for he would not be content, and he was sure other honorable members would not be content, that the Government should be allowed to treat the orders of the House in this way. It was a proof that they had a Government who were unable honestly to comply with the orders of the House, or were afraid to do so. This was an insufficient return, and he might say it was of a piece with the return made to the order of the House for the correspondence between Mr. Byrne and the Government, with respect to his dismissal and reappointment in the Government service; it was quite on a par. The whole thing was a shuffle; the Government did not come to the front honestly and answer questions in an honorable and straightforward way, and supply the information the House asked for, which any candid and honest Government would be anxious to supply. He protested against this kind of Government altogether; it was so foreign to what he knew should be the duties of the Government, and to what all independent members would expect; and he believed it would be subversive of that parliamentary rule, that whenever an order of that House was made, it should be properly obeyed. He was sorry he should have to take up the time of the House, but it was the Government that led to this detention of public business, because they did not act in the way which was conformable to their duties, and in accordance with the orders of that Chamber.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the remarks of the honorable member for Warrego were quite in accordance with a great deal that had emanated from him during the present session. This return was for—

“Copies of all correspondence between the present Agent-General and the Government, or between the Government and other persons, respecting the security to be entered into by the said Agent-General, as required by *The Immigration Act* ;”

and every particle of that correspondence was included in the return that had been laid on the table. There was nothing more to be given under the order than the return contained, and if anything more had been given, it would be beyond the order of the House.

MR. WALSH: Where is the security?

MR. PALMER asked, where was the bond referred to in this return? That certainly

was part of the correspondence, he should think; and he might be permitted to inquire, had the Government been asleep from the 28th of June last until the 11th of August?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Palmer Government were asleep for three years.

MR. PALMER said that had nothing at all to do with the question. They wished to know where this bond was, and why it had not been included in the return. They found from the paltry return laid upon the table, that from the 28th of June, when a telegram was sent to Mr. Macalister, asking him to find security, no action whatever was taken by the Government until the 11th of August—six weeks spell to think over it! That was what the Government called attending to the business of the country, he presumed. He said this was a false return. Where was the bond? The honorable the Colonial Secretary had tried to mystify the House and the country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Nothing of the sort.

MR. PALMER: Why was this bond not produced, or what was the bond? It was perfectly ridiculous; they could not take the word of the Government for anything.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said a great deal of unnecessary force had been displayed in regard to a very simple matter. The order of the House was that certain correspondence on a certain subject should be furnished, and all that correspondence had been produced; the honorable the Colonial Secretary said so, and he (the Attorney-General) was sure he knew. With regard to the bond referred to, the honorable member must recollect what he (the Attorney-General) said on that subject on a former occasion. He stated that shortly after Mr. Macalister left, a telegram was sent to him in Sydney, reminding him that he was required by the Immigration Act to give security; and subsequently, a paper purporting to be the security, and intended as the security, had been handed to him (the Attorney-General) in an informal or unofficial manner, and he had consulted his colleagues about it, and after having done so, he returned the paper to the gentleman from whom he had received it. That, he stated on a previous occasion; and he had not the least idea what the contents of that paper were, except that probably it was in the form of a bond. He could not even recall to mind what sort of a paper it was, but he presumed that he looked at it and saw it purported to be a bond; and he returned it, after consulting his colleagues, and found it was not such a bond as was required by law. Honorable members no doubt were aware—and if they were not, he could tell them—that the security required to be given by Mr. Macalister was that of a guarantee society; and as had been stated by the Colonial Secretary on a previous occasion, this personal security was not that of a guarantee society, and that in itself would be a sufficient reason for refusing it. There was

no desire on the part of the Government to withhold any information on the subject, and he should be glad to give any that had not yet been given.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had a distinct recollection that the last time this matter was under discussion they were told by the honorable the Colonial Secretary and also by the honorable the Attorney-General that the security was perfectly good, and the Government were prepared to accept it, only it had been sent in in an unofficial manner; and the reason that it must be the bond of a guarantee company was not then given at all. With regard to returns, he should like to point out, that three weeks ago a return was ordered to be laid on the table of all correspondence between the surveyors and the Commissioner for Railways and the Minister for Works, relating to the surveys of the different routes of the Northern Railway, and he inquired from the honorable the Premier yesterday, when he was to have that return, and he was coolly told he (the Premier) had never remembered anything about it, and he (Mr. Stevenson) might go down and tell Herbert about it. Was that the way the orders of that House were to be treated by the Premier? That was a return he particularly wanted to have before him when the debate on the Railway Reserves Bill came on; but it had not been furnished, and he was told to go and get Mr. Herbert to push it on. He protested against honorable members being treated in that way.

Mr. J. SCOTT said, in regard to the point about the security of the Agent-General, that if the bond was intended by Mr. Macalister to be handed to the Government or to any member of the Government, it ought to have been so delivered, and have been kept, and be producible. In the telegram in the correspondence, Mr. Macalister stated, "bond sent by Mein," and he (Mr. Scott) thought it was the duty of the Government to produce that bond; it must have been in their possession or in the possession of some member of the Government. The honorable the Attorney-General said he had had it; and some time ago, he told the House that the names mentioned in the bond were perfectly good, and the Government were perfectly willing to accept that bond, but, owing to some informality, it was not acted upon. Still, he held that that bond had been received by the Government—whether it was accepted by them or not was another matter—and it ought to be forthcoming. It was an official document, and the honorable the Colonial Secretary might say what he liked, but it was part of the correspondence. They had a telegram that it had been sent to the Government, and it was undoubtedly part and parcel of the correspondence relating to the matter in question.

The PREMIER said with regard to the observations of the honorable members for Warrego and Clermont, concerning returns, there

had been no session during the last ten years when returns had been furnished so quickly as they had this. Some very voluminous returns had been laid on the table within three or four days after they were ordered, and there had been considerable trouble and expense in furnishing those returns. He believed the return the honorable member for Clermont referred to was now on the table of the House, and that if the honorable member looked for it, he would find it amongst the reports sent in by the engineer, Mr. Ballard. With reference to the bond in question, he could only say he never saw it; it was never brought under his notice.

Mr. PALMER: Do you believe it ever existed?

The PREMIER said he was not aware it ever existed. There was no record of it in the Colonial Secretary's department, and the Colonial Secretary said he had never received it, and, consequently, it could not be a record, and could not be laid on the table of the House in the return asked for by the honorable member for Warrego.

Mr. IVORY said there had been some fresh information brought forward since he last addressed the House, and with regard to that, he might say that the proceedings seemed to be of the most anomalous description he had ever heard of. Here was a public document which the Agent-General forwarded, or informed the Colonial Secretary he had forwarded by a gentleman who was now a member of the Government, and it had reached one member of the Government, who seemed quietly to have burked it—he put it in his pocket and it disappeared.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I gave it back again.

Mr. IVORY said he should like to know what right the honorable the Attorney-General had to hush up this document. He put it in his waste-paper basket no doubt, and it was not forwarded as it ought to have been to the Colonial Secretary. It appeared rather strange to him why, in the first instance, it should have come into the hands of the Attorney-General; and as far as the rest of the Government were concerned, it appeared it had never passed through their hands, and they had no cognizance of it. The Premier said he never saw it; and the Attorney-General admitted that he had had it, and it was informal, and he passed it one side.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said I returned it to the person who gave it to me.

Mr. IVORY said, no matter how it was disposed of, it might have been put in the waste-paper basket, or returned to the gentleman who gave it to the honorable the Attorney-General; but it was a public document consigned to the Colonial Secretary by the Agent-General, and the honorable the Attorney-General had no earthly right to interfere with it. It was intended for the hands of the honorable the Colonial Secretary, and he (Mr. Ivory) should like to hear from him whether he ever saw it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I never saw it.

Mr. IVORY: Then there had been, he might say, a breach of trust on the part of the honorable the Attorney-General in not conveying this document to the hands of his colleague. He thought it was only right that this document, which no doubt still existed, should be placed before the House. At the same time, he could not exonerate the honorable the Attorney-General from blame in the matter, seeing that the document was intended for the hands of the Colonial Secretary. He begged to withdraw the motion for adjournment.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

#### PETITION.

Mr. GRAHAM presented a petition from certain selectors and others, complaining of the proposed deviation of a road between Warwick and Farm Creek. He said, before proposing that the petition be received, he—

The SPEAKER: The honorable member cannot discuss the petition.

Mr. GRAHAM said he thought, under the 212th Standing Order, in this particular case he might be allowed to say a few words. It was a petition against a grievance, which, if not taken notice of at once, could not be taken notice of at any future time, as he believed the time of the proclamation expired to-morrow.

The SPEAKER: The 211th Standing Order provides:—

“Every such petition not containing matter in breach of the privilege of this House, and which, according to the rules or usual practice of the House can be received, shall be brought to the table by direction of the Speaker, who shall not allow any debate, or any member to speak upon, or in relation to, such petition; but it may be read by the clerk at the table if required.”

Mr. GRAHAM said he thought this petition would come under Order 212, which provided:—

“In the case of such petition complaining of some present personal grievance, for which there may be an urgent necessity for providing an immediate remedy, the matter contained in such petition may be brought into discussion on the presentation thereof.”

The SPEAKER: I hardly think that Standing Order applies in this case. The honorable member cannot make a motion on the subject without notice. Besides which, I understand the petition is against the opening of a road, and the road has, I presume, been proclaimed in the *Government Gazette* for several months past, so that it can scarcely be considered a grievance suddenly arising. Therefore it cannot be discussed on being presented to the House.

Mr. BELL said it might be a grievance suddenly arising so far as the petitioners were concerned. They might not have had an opportunity of knowing it was published in the *Gazette*; and perhaps the honorable mem-

ber might be able to show it was a case of emergency, which had arisen from some sudden circumstances, and which might induce the House to take it into consideration.

The SPEAKER: I do not see any practical result that can follow from the discussion. If the honorable member gives notice of motion, he may apply to the House to appoint an early day for the discussion. I do not see that the discussion could have any practical result, and therefore, there is no good reason why we should violate our Standing Orders.

Mr. GRAHAM said he only received the petition that morning; and he found before moving for a Select Committee it was necessary to get the consent of the members to serve on that committee, but he had been unable to get that consent. Had he been able to do so, he should have followed the presentation of the petition with a notice of motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the matter. The time expired to-morrow, and perhaps the honorable the Minister for Works would give some assurance that the proclamation would be withdrawn so as to enable some action to be taken.

The SPEAKER: Does the honorable member move that the petition be received?

Mr. GRAHAM moved that the petition be received.

Mr. WALSH said the question seemed to him—

The SPEAKER: No debate can take place.

Mr. WALSH: But there has been debate.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Chair, chair.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the point of order had been whether the honorable member who presented the petition should be allowed to speak, in accordance with article 212 of the Standing Orders, and he thought the very object of that Standing Order was to meet a case of this kind, namely, one of emergency. Unless the House took the matter up now it would be useless to do so at any future time, because to-morrow, by the terms of the proclamation, the road in question would be declared open. If the honorable member was allowed to explain the object of the petition, his explanation might induce the House to proceed in the matter at once, and secure the object of the petition. It seemed to him the only object of the 212th Standing Order was to apply to such cases.

Mr. MORGAN said, rising to the point of order—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The honorable member for Darling Downs has moved that the petition be received, and I was in the act of putting the motion to the House, when the honorable member for Warrego rose.

Mr. WALSH said, rising to a point of order, he thought when the motion was received it could be debated. In presenting the petition—

The SPEAKER: I will read the Standing Order. It says the petition

"shall be brought to the table by direction of the Speaker, who shall not allow any debate, or any member to speak upon, or in relation to, such petition; but it may be read by the clerk at the table if required."

I would point out to the House that if any infraction of this rule is allowed, it may have a very undesirable effect in the future. A large number of petitions have been lately received, some upon subjects of great importance, such as railway petitions and others, and if any infraction of this Standing Order is permitted, it may lead to a great deal of discussion, and delay the business of the country.

Mr. J. SCOTT said, rising to the point of order, the question before the House was one of emergency, and not the value of the petition itself.

The SPEAKER: The honorable the Minister for Works has informed me that the proclamation which expires to-morrow is only the second proclamation, and a third proclamation will have to be published. I am not aware of my own knowledge whether that is the case or not, but the honorable the Minister for Works has assured me it is; and therefore there can be no emergency in the case.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he thought the honorable the Speaker was setting the example in debating the matter, and getting information which honorable members had not got. If they got an answer from the honorable the Minister for Works to show that the proclamation would not actually take effect to-morrow, he had no doubt the honorable member for Darling Downs would be perfectly satisfied; but they did not want the assurance of the honorable the Speaker, who had admitted that he knew nothing about the matter, except what he had heard from the honorable the Minister for Works.

The PREMIER said he believed he could simplify the matter. He thought matters of this sort, which were purely departmental, should not be brought before the House. The grievance complained of had not been brought before him yet, as Minister for Works, and when it did, he could promise the honorable member that he should give every attention to it. Suppose the second notice expired, there was yet a third one to be published; and he could assure honorable members that in this matter the interests of the public would not be overlooked. No road would be opened or closed when that course was not really required; and he would promise the honorable gentleman that if he withdrew his motion, he (the Premier) would give the matter every attention to-morrow.

Question—That the petition be received, put and passed.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. WALSH said, before the Orders of the Day were called, he wished to call the attention of the honorable the Speaker to a remark that he made yesterday, to the following effect:—

"He (the Speaker) was glad to see that his ruling was in exact conformity with the practice of the honorable member for Warrego while in the chair, as appeared from page 329 of the Votes and Proceedings for 1874."

Now, he (Mr. Walsh) wished to state, and he should give reasons for his statement, that the honorable the Speaker had been misinstructed or misled in this matter. On referring to the "Votes and Proceedings," he could not see that they at all bore out the inference the honorable the Speaker had drawn, or, he might say, the accusation he made. He found on the 30th of June, "the House sat beyond midnight," and on the 1st of July, "the Chairman reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow," and the next notice of the business performed was:—

"The remaining Orders of the Day (Government business), and the Notices of Motion (general business), postponed until Order of the Day No. 1 (general business) had been disposed of."

The honorable the Speaker had quoted that, he (Mr. Walsh) thought, as proof that his predecessor had allowed what he himself had allowed on Thursday last. But there was no proof whatever that the business of the Chamber on that morning was done in that way. On the contrary, he was very much inclined to think that was merely the way in which the clerk or clerks had described the business done; because he found, on the very same day, at the following sitting, that after certain business had been transacted, when they got down to Order of the Day No. 15:—

"The Order of the Day for the second reading of this Bill, and the Bill itself, discharged from the paper on motion of Mr. MacDevitt."

Then he found:—

"1. Orders of the Day, from No. 7 to No. 14 (Government business), postponed until the other business on the paper for to-day had been disposed of."

"2. Motion No. 1 (general business), by Mr. Moreton, for Mr. Nind, until to-morrow."

"3. Motion No. 4 (general business), by Mr. MacDonald until to-morrow."

"Mr. Nind not moving the motion standing in his name, No. 3, on the notice paper for to-day, it lapsed."

He was therefore justified in thinking that the honorable the Speaker had been misinstructed in this matter, and he thought it his duty to himself to refer to the question, because he did not think in any instance, as far as his memory went, had he allowed the 34th Standing Order to be contravened, as described by the honorable the Speaker.



The SPEAKER: I read from page 329 of the "Votes and Proceedings," and I took it for granted the journals of the House were correct.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honorable member for Warrego was quite wrong. The matter was perfectly plain, and the honorable member had apparently fallen into the error he wished the honorable the Speaker to fall into, and he (the Attorney-General) thought it only right that he should be corrected. What the honorable the Speaker said yesterday was perfectly correct; the whole of the Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion were postponed until after the first Order of the Day, general business.

Mr. WALSH: By whom?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said: By order of the House, of course; and that, having disposed of that, they started afresh, and when the Notices of Motion were called on, they were postponed, or lapsed; and there was no inconsistency at all. The error the honorable member had discovered was a mare's nest.

Mr. WALSH: That had nothing to do with the case at all.

The matter then dropped.

#### RAILWAY RESERVES BILL.

On the resumption of the adjourned debate, on the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS—

That this Bill be now read a second time,

Mr. MACROSSAN said: In rising, sir, to resume the debate on this adjourned motion, I must say that I agree thoroughly with several of the preceding speakers who have stated that this is a most important debate. No matter in what light you look at it, it is a most important debate—important, because if the Bill which is now before the House be carried into law, it will completely revolutionize the finances of the colony; and it is also important on account of the magnitude of the works which are proposed to be constructed by this Bill, and in other matters as well. But, sir, although I agree with those speakers as to the importance of the debate itself, I disagree entirely with the importance of the argument of the honorable the Attorney-General, who stated that the result of this debate would probably retard railway construction in this colony for many years to come. I entirely disagree with that. I do not believe that any folly this Government could commit, or any blunder they could make—financially or otherwise—is possible to retard or prevent in any way the construction of railways. I have so much faith, sir, in the unlimited resources of Queensland that I believe, even if the Government were to do their worst, or were to refrain from constructing railways at all, that even then the colony would progress in spite of them, and before long they would be compelled to adopt a

railway system, and one very different from that now proposed. This colony, sir, cannot be retarded; its natural resources, mineral and pastoral, are too great, and its commercial resources, dependent on these, certainly cannot be retarded either. And I think it is admitted by every one on each side of the House, that the position of the country in regard to its progress has come to this—that railways must be constructed. If the resources of the country are to be developed, there can be no doubt that the best and readiest way of developing those resources is by the construction of railways. Where it is found that a railway will in any way develop the resources of a district, it should be made, even if the traffic in that district is not sufficient to pay for the cost of the railway. But, sir, that is not the question before the House at present. The question before us is, how railways are to be constructed, and how they are to be paid for, and who is to pay for them? Now, sir, I consider that the Government who, on the last evening this subject was under discussion, tried to stifle the debate, took up a most unjustifiable position—a position which was unparliamentary, and I say, since I entered this House, unprecedented, and I think I may say almost unprecedented, within the last century at least, in the annals of parliamentary government. Here, sir, is a question which involves a large expenditure of money, a question upon which will depend the finances of the colony for some time, and a question upon which the most prominent members of the Government never opened their mouths during the whole of the debate. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer sat there during the whole period of the debate and never attempted to rise—never attempted to protest against the stifling of the debate which the honorable the Premier tried to effect; and he above all men in the Ministry should have given some reasons, and good reasons for this policy which will revolutionize the finances of the colony. And besides that, he was bound to rise and tell us how it is that the Government have receded from their former policy. He said three weeks before the House met that the present Government had determined not to proceed with railways, that they were determined not to have any extension of railways in their policy, and I say he was bound to rise, and the honorable the Premier was also bound to rise, and explain to the House and the country how it was they had changed their policy. And I say further, he was bound to tell us how they propose to construct railways without fresh taxation on the working classes of this colony, and if he is able to construct them without additional taxation, he has certainly made a great discovery. He told us previously that the working classes of this colony are unable to bear more taxation, and in consequence, there were to be no more rail-

ways at present, and I say it is a very anomalous position for those gentlemen to occupy. They, I say, were perfectly unjustified and most unwarranted in trying to prevent honorable members from expressing their opinions on this most important question. Why, sir, at the time the motion for the adjournment of the debate was moved there were not more than a dozen members who had spoken upon both the amendment and the main question, and yet the Government tried to stifle the debate—and why? To keep the country from understanding the real merits of the case; because I maintain that the question has never been entered into by any member on that side of the House yet; the real question has been misunderstood, or if understood, it has been misrepresented. Why, sir, the whole of the argument on that side of the House has been to prove that railway construction was a benefit—was profitable to the country. No honorable member that I know has ever denied that it was a benefit, or affirmed that it was unprofitable. So far from honorable members thinking for a moment that railways are not a benefit, the very policy of the Government, blundering policy as it is, was forced upon them by this side of the House. I say, sir, those two honorable gentlemen must speak; they must deliver their sentiments upon this great question, and I tell them this debate will not be allowed to close until they have given the House and country their opinions upon it. I cannot retire from this part of the question without alluding to a statement made by the Minister for Lands in disclaiming this as a party question. Who in this House ever thought for a moment that the carrying of this question would be a party triumph, or a triumph to any particular member on that side, or to that party? If there be any one to whom triumph is due, it is to you, sir, and not to any member sitting on that side of the House, much less to any member of the Government. The members of the present Government include those who actually expelled you, sir, from the Ministry, because you dared to assume a policy like this, but with this difference, that you were not prepared to make the blunder of constructing railways from the proceeds of the land, but by borrowing the money, and making the districts responsible for it; and, sir, I do not hesitate to say that were it not for the position you took up, not a member on that side of the House, except perhaps the Minister for Lands himself, would have dared to open his mouth upon the railway question. When the House met in the month of May, the only railway which the Government or their party had down as part of their policy for this session of Parliament, was the railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe; but the action taken by this side of the House on that occasion compelled the Government to change their policy. And now the Minister for Lands coolly says he

will not claim the carrying of this Bill as any ascendancy for his party! Why, sir, if this Bill be carried, it will be carried solely out of deference to the opinions imposed upon them by members on this side of the House, and notably by the honorable member for Maranoa, and myself, who moved the vote of want of confidence in the late Government. The Minister for Lands, also, during his speech, claimed my vote for this Bill in the following words:—

“The honorable member for the Kennedy claimed that in due time it (the principle) might be applied to his district; at any rate, whether the honorable member said so in specific terms or not, he expressed himself generally in favor of the Western Railway Bill, because the principle might be applied to other districts.”

In saying that, I know, of course, that the honorable gentleman claimed my vote for this Bill because I voted for the Western Railway Bill. Now, sir, the reason why I voted for that Bill must be plain, and simple, and apparent to anyone. Since the day upon which I came into this House, I have been an advocate of financial separation, and the first principle of financial separation is that each district should pay for the public works done within it; yet the honorable member for Maryborough seems to demand that I should vote for the Bill because the lands are said to be the principle upon which public works should be constructed. If it were possible for me to stand here all night, I could not put the principle of financial separation in a terser or better way than it is put in the leading journal of this city and colony; and I may remark, in passing, that it is a triumph for the men who have stood up time after time, and night after night, in this House, demanding financial separation, to find the leading journal of the colony come out so boldly upon the question, and demanding that for which we have so long contended. The *Courier* says:—

“The meaning of financial separation is that the accounts of the four principal divisions of the colony should be kept separate in the public ledger, and that the expenses of the general Government should be paid by a contribution from each district, assessed according to population, the remainder of the revenue of each district being left available for expenditure in the district in the construction of public works, or in payment of interest on loans.”

There is nothing in that extract about setting apart the lands; it is the “remainder of the revenue of each district” that is to pay for public works and the interest on loans; and I maintain it is impossible to construct public works from the lands alone, because we cannot sell the lands sufficient for the purpose. The principle that guided me in voting for the Western Railway Bill was to get the House, especially those on that side of the House who had always opposed financial separation, to commit themselves to the principle in any degree whatever. And, by voting for the

Western Railway Bill, I believe I accomplished that object, because, ever since that Bill was passed, the idea of financial separation has become stronger and stronger in this House and in the country, until it has now become so strong that no Ministry can pretend to maintain its place that will not agree to financial separation. I may also say that, while that Bill was going through committee, my views as to the application of the proceeds of the sale of lands to the making of railways were very much altered and influenced by the arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa; and although I assisted the Government, it will be found that after I became convinced by the honorable member for Maranoa, I never once opened my lips upon the question, but gave a silent vote, because I had then arrived at the conclusion that the honorable gentleman's arguments were the only sound basis upon which railways could be constructed. In proof of this, I may mention that in the beginning of this session, on the 23rd of May, when I moved the vote of want of confidence in the late Ministry, I stated distinctly that although I had voted for the principles of the Western Railway Bill, I believed the lands should be made to pay somehow for the construction of public works. I said distinctly then, that the railways should first be made, and the lands sold if necessary for the payment of the interest, and the principal if required. That was before the honorable gentleman opposite produced a Bill such as that they have placed before us, although they claim to have had this Bill in print weeks before the present session of Parliament. Of course, I am bound to accept this upon their statement as being correct; but taking into consideration the distinct and positive statement made by the Colonial Treasurer, that the present Government had agreed—not were of opinion—but agreed not to construct railways, I must think the Bill could not have been in print many days before this session was opened. I regard this measure in quite a different light from many members on this or that side of the House. As a northern member, I regard this measure more as an attempt, as far as the railway affecting the Kennedy is concerned, to sow dissension amongst the northern members. It is well known that until the present time the northern members have been united upon the question of financial separation. How can any northern member, how can I, myself, dare to ask for financial separation, after having accepted this railway, which would be constructed upon a principle diametrically opposed to financial separation? It would deprive me or any future member for the Kennedy, or any northern member, of the opportunity of lifting up our heads to demand justice for that portion of the country, because we should be accepting a railway which would entail an expense, not only upon the

different portions of the colony with which we had nothing to do, but upon that portion of the colony which has borne the largest amount of injustice with regard to railway construction. I should be voting for a great expense upon the whole district of the North, which would not be benefited by the construction of this railway, and I, therefore, stand here to say that if I considered this scheme a real one, which I do not—for I regard it as a delusion—I would not be prepared to accept it at the expense of financial separation. That is the first and greatest question in this country. It must be settled satisfactorily and equitably, and if not settled before long it will lead to a cry throughout the colony that will end in the dismemberment of it. Any honorable member who has the good of the colony at heart would regret that such a thing would take place, but it is bound to come if we do not get financial separation. If we do not get this, we shall have the outside districts in the North crying for territorial separation; this will inevitably be the case if there is not something like justice done, not only in railways, but other public works. I have read an extract from the *Brisbane Courier* showing what financial separation means. But how do the Government propose to carry out what they call financial separation? They propose to sell the lands of the colony in each railway reserve for the purpose of constructing railways. This either means that the railways shall not be made until the lands are sold, or that they shall first be made and the chance of selling the land take place afterwards. If the railway is first made, the money must be borrowed to make it, and I will ask the honorable gentleman who has charge of the Bill, who in that case is to pay the interest of the money? Is it not the people of the colony—the people of Bowen, and Kennedy, and Cook who will be called upon to pay the interest for the cost of construction? It is useless for the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to shake his head, because one thing or the other must take place: either the land must be sold to make the railway, in which case I maintain the railway will never be made; or, if the railway be made, the whole of the colony must be called upon to pay the interest of the making. There is no getting out of this dilemma. In the latter case, if the railway is made first, where is the Railway Reserves Bill? That Bill distinctly says, "Funds for the construction of the same shall be provided by the sale of Crown lands." If the funds are to be provided by the sale of Crown lands, and the Government borrow the money instead, the Bill becomes nothing. The whole thing is a sham, a delusion, and a snare, a thing which they have been driven into by the force of public opinion outside of this House, and by the action of honorable members on this side of the House; they have been driven into a policy of railway construction, and have

adopted a policy which, in our estimation, would prevent railways from being made. It seems that honorable members, in addressing themselves to this Bill, more especially the honorable the Colonial Secretary (and he was aided by several other members on that side of the House), have some very strange ideas concerning political economy. In trying to answer the arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa, they enunciated a doctrine which would lead one to suppose that the principles of political economy which are applicable to one country are not applicable to another. The principles of political economy are as plain as that two and two make four, and what would happen in any one country in making railways from the capital of the country, from the capital which is required for industries, would happen in this country also. The railways in Great Britain were made from the savings of the people of Great Britain; they were not made with the working capital of the people, and I say in making the railways from the land in this colony, you would be making the railways from the very life-blood of the people, from the money which is required for carrying on the different industries of the country, and the same result would take place here as in Great Britain, if they attempted to do the same thing. It was certainly very astonishing to hear such arguments propounded by a gentleman, who, from his position as Colonial Secretary, may be said to be the leader of the Government—for the Colonial Secretary has generally been the Premier of the colony. The honorable member for Bandanba, and the honorable member for the Cook, who is not now in his place, also had the same strange ideas in their head, that the principles of political economy, as applicable to Great Britain, were not applicable to this colony. Another idea which seemed to pervade the minds of honorable gentlemen on that side of the House was that the lands were to be "set apart" for the making of the railways; there is nothing whatever in this Bill for the setting apart of lands: the lands are to be sold and not set apart, and the railways are to be made in that way. The honorable the Attorney-General, in trying to meet the argument of the honorable member for Maranoa, failed most lamentably, and after reading through his speech, I am more than ever convinced there is very little in it. No doubt the honorable gentleman was taken at a disadvantage, being obliged to speak immediately after the honorable member for Maranoa; but I do think, from the position he occupies in the Government and in the colony, he ought to have made a much better attempt to answer the arguments of that gentleman than he did. In answering the honorable member for Maranoa, there was one thing he said which has struck me as being very strange, and which condemns the Bill, in fact, entirely.

In talking of the supposed scheme of the honorable member for Maranoa for making railways, he said, "All that is not in the Bill; such as charging the whole revenue, is bad in principle." That is just the thing which this Bill does, because I maintain it is impossible to sell the lands to make the railways, and thus the whole thing falls upon the revenue of the colony at last, so that in using these words, the Attorney-General actually condemned the Bill. He has, somehow, got the idea into his head that people will come from abroad to buy the lands to make the railways. One of the stock arguments during the passing of the Land Bill which has just left this chamber—arguments used against me and other honorable members on this side of the House in advocating a large extension of areas of land in the North and the outlying districts—was, that the land is not valuable. The argument has been that people have not come from the outside of the colony to buy these lands:—the young men, the members of old families at home, who were supposed to come and buy these lands, have not come. That was the stock argument used against me, but now the honorable gentleman, when it suits his purpose, uses it himself, and says that foreign capitalists will come. After they have raised the price of the land and reduced the size of the areas available, they use this argument. Why, sir, the thing is inconsistent, and absurd in itself. If men from the outside did not come when the area was larger, and the land cheaper, is it reasonable to suppose they will come now, when, as I have said, the land is doubled in price, and the area is reduced? The thing bears its own contradiction. I do not think it is necessary for me to dwell upon the honorable the Attorney-General's speech, because, as I have said before, he was taken by surprise; but I should remark that he himself last year, when the Western Railway Bill was under discussion, adopted a course which is worthy of notice. It may be remembered that the late member for Clermont, Mr. Graham, brought in an amendment, or a Bill rather, which would have been an amendment upon the Bill before the House, dividing the colony into railway districts. Those districts were much larger than the railway districts set apart by this Bill for the construction of railways. Take for instance the railway district proposed for the Wide Bay and Burnett:—instead of being confined to one patch of land on the Burnett, it included the whole of the watershed of the Mary and the Burnett. I remember the argument used by the Attorney-General against that Bill was that under it the people of the colony who were really in want of railways would never get them. Now, sir, if the people of the colony under that Bill, which actually gave more land for the making of railways than this Bill does, could not get railways, how is it possible that under this Bill we

shall get railways? Here are his words, on page 382, 18th vol. "Hansard":—

"He could point out by figures, also, that under this system the parts of the colony which most required railways would never be able to get them. He believed that if the principle were applied to the Wide Bay and Burnett, at the end of, perhaps, ten years, they might have £100,000 to their credit, which would be available for railways. After about ten years, that would be the effect."

Well, sir, the Wide Bay and Burnett Railways will cost a million of money, so that, according to his calculation, it will take 100 years before they will have money enough to make the railways. But I may ask, what will be the result of the application of this principle to the making of the railway in the Kennedy? If it will take 100 years to make a railway in the Wide Bay and Burnett district according to the Railway Districts Act of Mr. Graham, it will take more than 100 years to make a railway in the Kennedy, according to the principles of this Bill. I find by a return laid on the table of the House on the 8th of June last year, that the total amount of the land sold in the northern part of the colony was £126,381 from the year 1860 until the end of the year 1874. During these fourteen years, the very best coast lands of the colony were disposed of, from Cape Palmerston to the north of Cardwell; and during the period when almost the whole of the available land in that wide range of coast of 300 miles in extent, fit for agriculture, were disposed of, only £126,000 were received. A small portion of this district is taken and set apart for the making of the railway, and at the same time the best agricultural lands in this district have been disposed of, and I ask the Minister for Lands, how long it will take before he receives money enough from the sale of the land in that district to make a railway which will cost nearly £600,000, according to the estimate of the honorable the Premier? The £126,000 I have mentioned includes the whole of the North, it must be remembered, of which the Kennedy Railway Reserve is only a small portion. Just to show honorable members how great a bogus scheme this Railway Reserve Bill is, I will briefly explain to honorable members what this Kennedy Railway Reserve is. The yellow portion of the map which has been some time on the table for the inspection of honorable members, shows the gold fields of Charters Towers and Ravenswood. Of course, no Government will ever dare to sell the lands in the gold fields; so that is a portion we do not consider at all. The west end of this section is desert. The country has been unoccupied ever since the North was taken up; not a single run has ever been taken up there. Drawing a line from the south-eastern to the north-western corner, you will find that half the land within that railway reserve is comprised within the

desert and gold fields. One half is, therefore, taken away at once. Taking the coast portion of the reserve, we come to the land that has been sold. 48,000 acres have been sold there, as the best land in the district—the land on the Ross River, and upon Stewart's Creek. That land, however, is gone, and you may expect nothing from that; but the remainder of the portion along the coast—those splendid marine plains which the honorable Minister for Lands expatiated so eloquently about—those beautiful plains which the Premier saw from the deck of his steam-boat—the whole of that land has been unoccupied for nearly ten years. I have in my possession a list of the runs with the names of the late lessees, and every inch of that land, forming so large a portion of the railway reserve, for thirty miles back, has been abandoned. This is the land to construct a railway from! Besides this, the honorable gentleman told the House the other evening that he would resume only one half of the runs; but when the best of the remaining portion of this available part of the reserve is resumed, how much land will there be left to sell for railway purposes? Just one million and a quarter acres, and I appeal to you, sir, as one honorable member at least, in this House, who knows what that land is, to say conscientiously whether there are 100,000 acres in that reserve that would fetch five shillings per acre if it were put up to auction to-morrow. I say there are not 100,000 acres in the whole reserve that would fetch five shillings per acre, and I maintain that there is more than one half of the portion which is available that would not fetch two shillings and sixpence per acre.

MR. WALSH: Nor a shilling.

MR. MACROSSAN: I admit there is one small portion, from Dalrymple, on the other side of the Burdekin, which is about 60,000 acres, and this is the only land that is to make a railway for the miners of Charters Towers, and the business people of Townsville. Great delusion and sham as this scheme is, this particular portion of it is the greatest delusion and sham of the whole, and if it were possible that I could so far forget myself as to vote for a railway reserve like this, I should be undeserving to hold a seat in the House. I have been called upon by the Premier and the Minister for Lands to vote for this railway reserve, and by some means or other the honorable the Premier has, I may say, misinformed people in the North upon the true bearings of the question. The other day I presented a petition from 700 people on Charters Towers, praying for the construction of a railway; but if those petitioners are to wait until the present Government makes them a railway according to this Railway Reserves Bill, the deep sinkings on that gold field will have reached the depth of 1,000 feet before it is made. I think honorable members will give me

credit for knowing something about my own district. I have been over that district from north to south, from east to west, time after time. I have ridden over it, walked over it, prospected over it for gold, and I know, that what I say concerning that reserve is true. Beyond what I have stated, I may add that in addition to the area marked yellow, a large portion of the reserve is auriferous ground, which I should be the last man to sell. There are the Fanning River, Star River, and Keelbottom Creek districts, all being auriferous districts, that have been worked, and will be worked again. Allowing then the fullest latitude to the Minister for Lands, for making a railway, I am sure he would not make ten miles of line in that reserve, although that ten miles should be attempted over the best ground. It is incumbent upon me as a northern member who has continually advocated financial separation, to make a stand upon this question, because it has been apprehended by Ministers and some of their supporters, that this is the thin edge of the wedge for financial separation. I say, sir, it is the thin edge for territorial dismemberment; for if the people of this part of the country think their prospects depend upon this Bill, they will soon apply for territorial separation as the best means of securing a railway that will be serviceable to them. The foolhardy policy of the Government has led to this railway mania on their part. I hold in my hands a list of 16 or 17 different railways in this colony, which are either under construction, proposed to be constructed, or asked to be constructed by different members on both sides of the House. Is it not high time, Mr. Speaker, that a definite principle for the purpose of constructing railways should be adopted, when we find that honorable members on both sides of the House are asking for surveys in districts which in the next session of Parliament will lead to distinct propositions for the construction of railways? If this principle of making the railways exclusively from the land is carried out, what will become of those portions of the colony where the land is alienated? What will become of those portions of the colony in agricultural districts, such as around Ipswich and the Logan, where they have a perfect right to have railways made, and where railways, if they do not pay the interest on the cost of construction, will at least enlarge and increase the population. But to show the little faith that honorable members on either side can have in the sincerity of the Government in proposing this railway scheme, I will ask, what data the honorable gentleman gave in moving this Bill? I answer, no data whatever. Has it not been a cry inside and outside of the House that no more railways should be constructed until we have proper plans, estimates, and data to go upon? Yet we have been furnished with neither the one nor the other. When the honorable gentleman came to the

Charters Towers and Townsville Railway he said he was not prepared to justify the construction of this railway by returns of traffic. Now, if any railway out of the whole number proposed to be constructed is justified by the returns of traffic, it is this one; and I maintain that notwithstanding the honorable member's statement those returns were either in his possession or were easily attainable, if he tried to get them. But I couple this with several remarks of honorable members on that side of the House to the effect that these railways are not to be proceeded with simultaneously, which means this:—"We, the southern members, are strong enough to get a railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe, Maryborough to Gympie, and perhaps a line in the Wide Bay district; but for the present we will give up the Charters Towers and Townsville Railway until we have some data to go upon." Now, I will give the honorable gentleman some data to go upon with regard to this railway, and I will show by the plan proposed by the honorable member for Maranoa—the plan which has been more generally adopted in idea by members on this side, and by the country—how the Charters Towers Railway should be made. By the latest returns I have received from that district, the amount of traffic between Townsville and Charters Towers is 5,000 tons annually at the present moment. If the railway were made between the two places—a distance of 88 miles—and those 5,000 tons were carried by it, £3 per ton (as it would be) being charged for carriage, which is less than half the present rate at the most favorable period of the year, it would produce £15,000. Ravenswood, which, is in the same district nearly as Charters Towers, would benefit by the railway; for although it would not go by the Ravenswood properly, all the traffic and passengers would be carried within 20 miles of the centre of the Ravenswood gold field. I have reckoned as a moderate calculation 1,500 tons of the traffic of Ravenswood and the other separate gold fields at £2 per ton, which would be £3,000, making £18,000 for the traffic from goods alone. The passengers I have reckoned at 100 per week, which according to the returns I produced to the House the other day from Cobb and Co. is a very moderate computation. I have put down the passenger fare at thirty shillings per head; so that the total sum available from the traffic and passenger returns, as they at present exist, would be £25,800. Now let us see about the construction of the railway. Supposing the railway cost more money than the estimate of the Minister for Lands. The honorable gentleman says it will be more than £500,000. Let us, for the sake of argument, suppose it is £600,000; the interest of this at five per cent. would be £30,000. I am basing my estimate upon the supposition that one train per day each way will be sufficient to carry the traffic. The honorable member for Maranoa, or some other authority on railway matters,

will correct me if my estimate upon this point is wrong. Taking then, the 88 miles, or, rather, the same distance both ways, namely, 176 miles, at 4s. 6d. per train mile, we arrive at £13,800 per annum. This leaves nearly £14,000 to pay the interest upon the cost of construction, besides the working expenses. We thus have only £16,000 to be made up from other sources, and those other sources should be this:—When the railway is made, sufficient land should be sold at intervals along the line. That land would be naturally enhanced in value, and the land sold in this way would make up the balance of £16,000. If the honorable gentleman was sincere, why did he not produce some such moderate estimate as this? I do not in this estimate take into account the returns from the Cape River, which would be largely benefited by the railway, and I take no account of the large traffic of the Flinders and the Flinders Waters, which would come from Dalrymple. I maintain, sir, that if I had the means of estimating the returns of the Cape River and the Flinders country, this railway at the present moment would be seen to be nearly sufficient to pay the working expenses and the interest on the cost of construction; and yet, not one single word came from that honorable gentleman to prove the desirability of making that railway. I have grave doubts, sir, about the honorable gentleman's faith and sincerity when he came to speak of that railway. I have always had doubts of the intentions of the Ministry to construct railways in the Kennedy Reserve; but the moment I saw the reserve marked out, I was convinced they were not sincere, and had no intention of making this railway. Now sir, I have not a word to say against the making of other railways, but what I insist upon is this, that the people of the North—the people who have hitherto been called upon to pay the cost of the construction of railways both in the North and in the South, should in no way be asked to pay any portion of the expense of making railways in the Wide Bay and Burnett district, or in the Stanthorpe district. That they will be so called upon is evident from the speeches on the other side of the House. They will not stay till the land is sold! No, the money is to be borrowed first, and where is the interest on that money to come from, or where is the cost of construction to come from? Not from the sale of lands alone, for I say it is impossible that the money derived from the lands alone will ever make these railways. Supposing they could, then I ask, whether it would be advisable or prudent? Even supposing the men in the colony had money enough to invest it in lands to the extent required—if they could spare it—I say that all the savings of the people of Queensland would be required. Even supposing, as I say, that was possible, it would not be desirable. Well, sir, one of the points of financial separation debated in this House

is this, that adjustment of accounts is required at the outset of the establishment of financial separation. A long outstanding account is owing—I need not go into figures to show how much more revenue has been derived from districts north of Cape Palmerston than from districts south of it, as that has not been disputed; the returns laid on the table of this House from time to time show that. According to my calculation last year, there was a quarter of a million due to the people of the North for interest paid by them on the money for making the Southern Railway; and I think no person will contend for one moment that the people of the North should be charged with the interest on money borrowed to make a railway which benefits one district alone, and which has enhanced the value of property in that district; for no one can deny that since the railway was made, the land in that district has been benefited to the extent of 50 per cent. I think that no person in the North can be called on to pay one single penny of that. That is an outstanding account, and I maintain that the moment we agree to financial separation, there must be an adjustment of accounts. If that adjustment does take place, what will be the result to the North? At this present moment, a quarter of a million is due to the North for interest, and in five years that will make a capital of a million. Therefore is it not better for the people of the North to stand by this principle of financial separation, and to have a million of money in five years, with which they can make, not only this line from Townsville to Charters Towers, but also other railways in the North? Now, sir, I think it is thoroughly well known to this House that there is no honorable member on this side of it who is opposed to the construction of railways.

The PREMIER: Oh, oh.

Mr. MACROSSAN: The difference between us and the Government is the mode of getting the money.

Mr. PALMER: How to make the railways, and where.

Mr. MACROSSAN: How to make them, and where, as the honorable member says. I think I have fully established my position in this House as an advocate of railway construction; had I not been an advocate of it, honorable members now on the Treasury benches would not have been there, and their predecessors in office would not have been turned out. At the very commencement of the session I compelled the party sitting behind those gentlemen on the Treasury benches—I say I compelled them to adopt a policy of railways—a policy, sir, which turned you out. Not contented with that, some of the honorable members of the present Government tried to ruin you politically. It was known before this House met for this session, that not only were attempts made to fasten upon you a particular railway policy, but also other things for

the purpose of disparaging you politically—a policy which the present Government have taken up, and which is so defective, that no honorable member on this side, and no sane man in the country, can possibly adopt it. I have no doubt, sir, that the Government will have a majority in the division on the second reading of this Bill. But even if they have a majority, I have very grave doubts of their sincerity in making this particular railway from Townsville to Charters Towers. I warn them, however, that although I shall vote against the second reading of this Bill, when we go into committee upon it, and also when we consider the Loan Estimates, if any attempt is made to shunt this railway out of the loan for the purpose of making the Wide Bay or Stanthorpe lines, I shall be one to avail myself of every form of the House to obstruct them in doing so. If they are sincere in their promises to make railways, they must make them all, and not make any more in the South at the expense of the North; and I think I shall be supported by honorable members representing the Central and Western districts, if the Government attempt to shunt this railway out, in any course I may adopt. At the same time, I feel bound to vote against the second reading of this Bill, as I believe the principle of it to be bad. Although voting against it, it must be understood thoroughly, that I am an advocate of making railways wherever the people of a district are willing to be charged with the cost of construction, either directly or indirectly; not that every district which wants to have money spent in it should have a railway, but that they should first give a guarantee that they will bear the expense of it themselves, instead of its being laid on other districts which are not likely to be benefited by it in any way.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker—sir, I do not intend to take up the time of the House at any great length, but I must express my regret at the speech which has just been made by the honorable member for the Kennedy. The opinions of that honorable member since last session have undergone an entire change, and in fact, whilst listening to his speech, I could hardly believe he was the same member. At that time, sir, he was a staunch advocate of the very principle we now propose, and in proof of that, I shall quote his opinions in reference to the Western Railway Bill. Before I do so, however, I may observe that the policy of the Government, as contained in this Bill, has been enunciated not only by that honorable member, but also by almost every honorable member opposite when discussing the question of financial separation. The Government hold the opinion that districts benefiting by railways should bear the cost of construction of those railways, and they found that, by making those lines out of loan, the cost would bear unequally on different parts of the colony; and also because, as I have pointed out, under the present

system of single electorates, if we go in for a loan, every honorable member would require a railway for his district. Now, what were the observations of the honorable member last year on the Western Railway Bill, the policy of which was the same as we now propose? He said that—

“He agreed with the honorable gentleman so far as the policy of the Government was indicated to be the sale of land for the construction of railways, instead of applying for loans for railway purposes, because the system of loans always bore unequally upon different portions of the colony.”

He also said on the same occasion that—

“He should expect the Government to follow the policy that they proposed in the extension of all future lines; it should be applied to the Maryborough and Gympie Railway, to the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, and to the Warwick and Stanthorpe Railway.”

That is the very principle we are now proposing—that the proceeds from the lands shall be made to pay for the construction of these railways, and it has been found impossible to make them in any other way except on the principle of financial separation. I will also quote from the Financial Separation Bill of the honorable member for Port Curtis, which provided that—

“All moneys expended upon the construction of railways, improvements of harbors and rivers, loans to municipalities, public works and buildings, roads and bridges, shall be deemed to be local expenditure on account of the several districts for which the same have been incurred.”

And the honorable member himself stated at the time that the object of the Bill was to saddle districts benefited by railways with the cost of such railways. That is the principle we have embodied in our Bill. Then again, these are the words of the honorable member for Dalby whom I am astonished is not an advocate of our railway policy; he said

“that the object of the Bill was to make the interest on the public loan a charge on those districts that benefited by that loan.”

This is the very principle we are going in for, and I am really astonished to find that honorable members expressing such opinions are opposing this Bill, and setting their faces against this simple measure of ours, which at heart I have no doubt most of them approve of. The honorable member for the Kennedy stated that there was not sufficient good land in the Kennedy Reserve schedule to pay for the construction of the Townsville and Charters Towers Railway; but there is inferior land everywhere—some of the land between Dalby and Roma is inferior. I may tell the honorable member this, however, that there is ample land of a superior quality in his district in and around Dalrymple to more than pay for the cost of construction of that railway. It will cost only £588,000, whilst the sale of



land will bring double that, in the same way as fifty miles of the land between Dalby and Roma will pay for that line three or four times over. The honorable member also said that we had no proof that the Western Railway was a success as far as the sales of land are concerned, and other honorable members have said the same thing; but taking the base line from Roma to Mitchell Downs, there are 3,000,000 acres of really good land, exclusive of 200,000 acres for homesteads, and if that land is sold at only 5s. an acre, although some will fetch from 30s. to £2 an acre, it will pay for the construction of the Dalby and Roma Railway, without even selling one acre of what has been spoken of as the inferior land between Dalby and Roma, and at that cheap rate the money can be readily found in the colony to pay for it. I have no hesitation, sir, in stating that the land in the Kennedy district will bring from a £1 to 30s. an acre, especially the land in and around Dalrymple. With regard to waiting for a trial of the working of the Western Railway Bill, it is all moonshine: there is no question but that the land in that reserve will pay for the railway four times over, besides making the line to Mitchell Downs. The Government are in no hurry to sell the land, as they have £250,000 to work upon, which will be sufficient to construct a third of the line its entire length; and when money does run short, they will sell some of the best land, but not till then, and they will take very good care that the land will not be frittered away, but that it will fetch its full value. The honorable member for Port Curtis was afraid that it would be frittered away; but I can assure the honorable gentleman that it will not be. I confess I was the more astonished at the remarks of the honorable member for East Moreton, as that honorable member must know that this Bill is infinitely superior to the Western Railway Bill, so far as details are concerned. I recollect that when the late member for Clermont, Mr. Graham, proposed as an amendment, that two miles on each side of the Dalby and Roma line should be reserved for homesteads, the honorable member for East Moreton was opposed to it. Under this Bill, we can set apart half of the lands for homesteads, whilst, under the Western Railway Bill we can only set apart two miles on each side of the line for that purpose; yet the honorable member supported that measure, and now opposes this one, which is far more liberal. The honorable member wanted to sell the whole of the land by auction, and I ask him, how he can reconcile that statement with the statements he made a few evenings ago when this Bill was last before the House? These are the words the honorable member made use of when Mr. Graham moved his amendment for setting aside two miles on each side of the line for homesteads:—

“He (the Secretary for Lands) did not see that the amendment would be any improvement.”

In fact, the honorable member objected to any land being set apart as homesteads. The present Government might, if they choose, take the whole of these lands for homesteads, but they would not do so; no Government would do it. In all the reserves, a part will be set apart as homesteads, and so the honorable member may rest contented that the public interest will not suffer any more in the hands of the present Government than under the present Homestead Act in our land system; and I believe just as much settlement will take place under it as took place under the Act of 1868. The honorable member for the Kennedy said this railway policy was forced upon us, but that I deny. I plainly indicated the policy of the Government when this House met, namely, that we intended to go in for five lines of railway, and that we intended to make reserves in accordance with the principle of the Western Railway Bill. We have carried that out, and I have put our measure before Parliament, so that I deny that any railway policy was forced upon us; my statement, as reported in “Hansard,” will prove that I am correct in what I now say. I am not going into the reasons for making these railways, but merely to answer some of the statements which have been made by honorable members against this measure. I regret that the honorable member for Port Curtis should have stated that if these railways were commenced simultaneously, which of course they would be, there was not sufficient skilled labor in the colony to make them; and the honorable member, in confirmation of his statement, referred to the Dalby and Roma line. Now, it is patent to any one who knows anything about that line, that there were ten applications for every man wanted, and that there were hundreds of men that went washing and shearing because they could not get employment on that line. I can assure the honorable member, that without looking far abroad, we shall readily find sufficient labor to make all the railways we shall require for some time. It is hardly necessary for me to answer the arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa, for they were insane arguments. The fact is, that honorable gentlemen opposite do not want a railway any more than the honorable member for Port Curtis wants one, although that honorable member, when outside the House, would lead the world to believe that he is a staunch advocate of railways. It is the same with almost every honorable member opposite. The speech of the honorable member for Port Curtis, was to the effect that he wanted no more railways than those in course of construction. I was surprised at the honorable member for Maranoa saying that there was not sufficient money to carry on the business of the colony, and at the same time to make railways. That is absurd, for money will come here, even from the old country, to buy land, just as

readily almost as that money could be got for the purpose of making railways. But I am not going further into this matter, or into the finance question raised by the honorable member for Maranoa, but if the honorable member wants an answer, I will refer him to a few articles which have recently appeared in the *Courier* newspaper. I consider them a complete answer to the policy put forth by the honorable member, and that they are excellent articles, although it is not often I have reason to speak in favor of the articles in that paper; at any rate, they are a complete answer to the honorable member. I do not think it is necessary to go into the question of whether these railways will pay, but I believe that it has been shown that most railways will pay in time, in particular that one from Townsville to Charters Towers, and if the land is sold it will pay for the construction and maintenance of that line, and give a handsome return. The honorable member for Carnarvon has pointed out very clearly that the Stanthorpe line will pay, and I have no doubt that every honorable member is prepared to show how a railway in his district will pay. The honorable member for Mulgrave, no doubt, can show that the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line will pay, and the honorable member for Gympie, the Maryborough and Gympie line; in fact, those honorable members will be able, no doubt, to make out as good a case as the honorable member for Carnarvon. To keep pace with the other colonies, it is absolutely necessary that this broad policy of ours should be adopted in order to promote settlement, and open up this vast continent, which I regret to say is devoid of navigable rivers. The railways will be made without delay, and I can assure the House, that if this Bill passes, and we get the loan, these railways will be pushed on as rapidly as possible. As there are other honorable members who are desirous of speaking, I will not detain the House longer, but I hope that we shall come to a division this evening, and thus be able to get on with the other important business before us.

Mr. MACDONALD said: Sir, as the honorable member for the Kennedy and others on his side have expressed their doubts as to the sincerity of honorable members on the Government side in supporting the Bill from conscientious motives, I wish to say a few words before the question is put. I contend that the current of public opinion is entirely in favor of railway progress; and I have long held the opinion that where railway extensions are necessary to open up and utilise the good lands in the interior, it is better to commence such extensions even a little too soon than too late. We should, I think, take warning from New South Wales and Victoria, where they now have railways running for hundreds of miles alongside macadamised roads, which cost about £2,000 per mile, and are now seldom used. Certainly our Queensland roads are not of that substantial

character, but from some causes—perhaps higher rates of wages, or inability of men to do as much as in cooler climates, one thing is certain—that under the present system road-making is very expensive, and not altogether satisfactory. If we take the speech of the honorable member for the Maranoa as an index of the railway policy of the Opposition, the only material difference seems to be in regard to the mode of raising the funds for the cost of construction. The honorable member for the Maranoa says, "Borrow the money and do not interfere with the lands until they are enhanced in value by railway communication." I think that is a very pleasant way out of the difficulty, and should be happy to support such a system if convinced that it will be carried out in its integrity and prove successful. But I do not think it economic to borrow millions of pounds, and have a large portion of the amount lying for years at such rates of interest as the colonial banks may think fit to allow; such a state of things will create very erroneous impressions of prosperity and lead to rash speculations; neither do I think it good policy to keep the lands locked up till the completion of the railways, instead of encouraging *bona fide* settlement along the lines in order to make them reproductive. Holding these views, I think it better that Parliament should determine the position and extent of the areas necessary for railway purposes, and not leave that power in the hands of any Government; for at present they have the power, under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, to resume any portion of a run they may think proper. There are few persons whose interests will be more affected by the Bill than my own. Every run which I own in the settled districts has been included in schedule No. 3; but knowing that speedy railway extension in the Central districts is so essential to the prosperity of the people, who, in fact, consider it indispensable, and believing as I do that if the Bill is thrown out, railway extension will be indefinitely postponed, I feel bound to leave my interest as a lessee out of consideration, and to give the Bill my qualified support. If I have felt any doubts on that point, the speech of the honorable member for Port Curtis has removed them; for it is plain to all who heard that speech that that honorable member is directly opposed to the construction of railways under any system. I hope that if the Bill passes, the Government do not intend to commence the whole of the proposed lines for some considerable time, otherwise the objections of the member for Port Curtis may be to some extent justified; the labor market will be seriously affected, and works of a private character brought to a standstill. I approve of the principle of the Bill in making the lands in each district chargeable with the cost of railway construction. It seems to me the only way by which the general public can be fairly asked to consent to works of such magnitude; but I

should decidedly object to any such radical changes as would follow if the Bill were allowed to pass in its original shape, because it would be ruinous to a large body of useful colonists, who are entitled to the favorable consideration of that House. I refer more particularly to the pastoral lessees in the Central and Northern district; men who have expended hundreds of thousands of pounds in occupying and improving their runs and stock; men who contribute largely to the revenue, by payment of rents and Customs duties, and who, in their districts, have hitherto been regarded as the chief supporters of all classes. However, I contend that whenever it can be shown that large holdings can be otherwise occupied with greater advantage to the colony or district, the pastoral lessee must be prepared, after receiving reasonable notice, to make room for the men of smaller means. If that is done gradually and judiciously, very much of that antagonism which too frequently exists between squatters and selectors will be removed, and they will probably be a mutual benefit to each other. The selector will find profitable employment in certain seasons of the year by contract work, such as carrying, fencing, &c., and the squatter can assist and advise the selector in the choice and treatment of his stock. The squatter must be prepared to see his run eventually changed into numerous freeholds. But the idea of throwing open immense tracts of country simultaneously before there is capital to purchase, or population to occupy one-hundredth part of it, will, I contend, be a reckless waste of the public estate. The squatter will be unnecessarily disturbed, his credit jeopardised, and his very life harassed out of him by some few enterprising selectors, who, by purchasing the choice, or watered portions of his run, may leave the remainder comparatively valueless. A selection of 640 acres might in places destroy ten thousand acres, so far as the squatter is concerned, because, if his dams or permanent waterholes were taken, his sheep must travel or perish. The selector does not labor under that disadvantage, for, provided the land is equally good, he can soon secure sufficient water for his smaller requirements. The present position of the pastoral lessees in the Central districts, is far from being an enviable one; they have much to contend with, and unless their tenures are satisfactorily settled, and that soon, many of them will become bankrupt, and their runs a desolate waste. Of course the squatters there must not expect to enjoy such a tenure as has been allowed to the squatters in the southern portions of the colony; but their tenure should be such as would justify them in expending large sums of money in fencing out and destroying the game, otherwise the kangaroo, which are increasing to an alarming extent, will soon destroy the runs. My object in addressing the House at this length

is not so much with a view to justify the vote which I intend to give, but rather to point out to members on both sides who are desirous of legislating for the general good, that in justice to all classes, certain amendments should be made when the Bill is in committee. I think that the pastoral tenants should not be in a much worse condition than they are at present, and that the colony would suffer to some extent through the depreciation in the pastoral interest. I hope that the Government will exercise a wise discretion in allowing the squatters such leases for the remnant of their runs as will enable them to utilise those lands until they are really required for public purposes. I am sorry to find that several honorable members whose interests are in common with my own differ from me on the question under discussion, and I cannot help thinking that they are biased by party feeling; but I hope they will seriously consider the interests of their constituencies and those of the general public before it is too late to rectify the evil they may inflict.

Mr. STEVENSON said: I am sorry, sir, that the speech of the honorable member who has just sat down has been almost entirely lost to this House, because there may have been some argument, or some reason, or some apology for a reason in it why the Ministry should have introduced this Bill; for the Ministry have signally failed in giving any reason whatever. The only time the honorable member for Blackall warmed up and became a little intelligible and a little more eloquent was when he commenced to talk about his own runs, and the deduction from his speech, as far as I could hear, was, that he would give his opposition to the Bill as it at present stands, but that he had been squared by the Government having told him they would only resume half his run, and I am not going to try to refute that, because I believe it is perfectly true. I have been waiting patiently until this stage of the debate to hear some sort of reason, or apology, or excuse from some member on the Treasury benches why the Bill has been introduced at all, or why the Ministry have so completely changed their views on the railway question in so short a time, or how they can reconcile their course of action now with their course of inaction some months ago. The honorable the Premier has told us that the reasons are a matter for after consideration. Well, sir, who ever heard of such a statement as that from a Premier? Telling us that the reasons for introducing this sweeping measure is a matter for after consideration! He told us that honorable gentlemen on this side of the House could tell how the railways would pay. If that is the only excuse for a scheme like this, I think it is time something was done to prevent its being carried out. The honorable the Attorney-General certainly told us that he had long ago explained to the House why the Ministry

had said one thing before their constituents and another when they came to this House; but I for one have never heard the explanation, and as a further excuse, he told us the Bill was in print two or three weeks before they met the House. But what does this prove? Instead of being an argument in favor of this measure, it simply proves that the Ministry changed their opinion in a far shorter time than we gave them credit for. These seem to be the only reasons we are to have for introducing this measure at all. Now, sir, I intend to deal with the measure more particularly as it affects the district which I have the honor to represent; but before doing so, I must protest against the course adopted by the Government in this debate. Notwithstanding the able manner in which the Bill has been discussed on this side of the House, and strong arguments have been brought to bear against it, in fact it is only on this side of the House it has been discussed at all; for we have had no discussion about the Bill on the other side, and I do not believe any member on the other side knows anything of the principles of the Bill. In fact, I do not believe a single Minister understands the Bill, or has any conception of the effect it would have if passed into law, which I hope it never will. I hope, if this Assembly passes it, the Upper House will show that they have more sense than to allow such a measure to pass into law. I protest against the principle of the Bill, which is, as I understand it, to draw capital from the sales of land to make railways, thereby impoverishing the State, which, no doubt, must result ultimately in heavy taxation. I think that must be apparent to every one. It has been proved most conclusively by the honorable member for Maranoa, and by other members on this side of the House, that such a measure must result in heavy taxation. But I do not object to the Bill on this ground only. I protest against it because it proposes to deal unfairly with individual districts; and I shall deal with facts and figures to show this. I do not intend to go into the subject so far as it concerns districts I do not know anything about. I shall only refer to the Central Railway Reserve, and I shall draw the attention of honorable members to the plans and maps laid on the table of this House of the line to Emerald Downs, and I should like to point out the reason given why the route has been changed from Lurline to Clermont, to that from Lurline to Emerald Downs. The honorable the Minister for Lands gave us this as his reason:—

“I have been informed by Mr. Ballard that the engineering difficulties would be much greater than the line to Emerald Downs. The distance would be somewhat less, but from the number of creeks and rivers to be crossed, Mr. Ballard leads us to believe that the best line for adoption would be one from Emerald Downs, and afterwards to Clermont; because, although it would be some

nine or ten miles longer, the engineering difficulties would be considerably less.”

Now, sir, I think it was very weak on the part of the honorable the Minister for Lands to bring forward an argument like that, when we have the maps in the House, and any honorable member can go and find out the distances for himself. Why, instead of the extra distance being only nine or ten miles, it is twenty-four miles, as the honorable the Minister for Lands' own figures will show it at a glance. His figures are these:—From Lurline to Emerald Downs, thirty-three miles, and from Emerald Downs to Clermont sixty-eight miles, making in all 101 miles. Now, sir, the distance from Lurline direct to Clermont is seventy-seven miles, and that at once shows that the extra distance is twenty-four miles. With regard to the engineering difficulties, I am not going to set myself up against the engineer, and say the line can be taken that way, but I know the country pretty well, and the only difficulty I am aware of in the way is crossing the Mackenzie River; and it would seem a most extraordinary thing if the cost of 24 miles of railway would not cover the extra expense of a bridge over the Mackenzie. I shall now draw the attention of honorable members to a petition presented to this House a short time ago, which suggested what ought to be the route of the Great Northern Railway. That petition set forth that the railway line should diverge from Lurline, and one branch should go *via* Clermont to Aramac, and another *via* Springsure to Tambo. I shall give the distances. From Lurline to Springsure, 45 miles; and from Springsure to Tambo, 130 miles; making in all 175 miles. The distance from Lurline to Clermont, 77 miles; and from Clermont to Aramac, 170 miles; making a total of 247 miles. These together, sir, make a grand total of 422 miles in the routes I have mentioned. Now, sir, take the distances of the routes as proposed by the Government, and mooted in the speech of the honorable Minister for Lands. From Lurline to Barcaldine Downs is 233 miles; the branch from Emerald Downs to Clermont, 68 miles; and the branch from Emerald Downs to Springsure is 43 miles, making a total of 344 miles; leaving a difference, in favor of the Emerald Downs route and branches mentioned, of 78 miles. But look at the difference of the country the line will pass through, and look at the extent of country these two lines would open up, and the importance of their construction will be seen. The honorable the Minister for Lands talked about opening up the Aramac district. Does the honorable member know what is the length of the Barcoo River? Its length from Tambo to its junction with the Thompson is more than 300 miles, and the Aramac is 150 miles north of Tambo, and to the west and north of the Aramac there is the large tract of country watered by

the Thompson, Diamantina, and western rivers. These two lines would open up a district which I feel certain would make those railways pay, and I do not see why the people in the North should not have two branches to their line as well as those in the South. We do not ask the divergence to be made at a point so near the coast as down here. The distance from Brisbane to Toowoomba, where the line diverges to Warwick and Dalby, is only some ninety miles, and from Rockhampton to Lurline it is 141 miles, and I repeat that I can see no reason why the North should not have two branches to its line as well as the South. But, sir, supposing for the sake of argument, the Ministry are right in adopting the route to Emerald Downs, why in the name of fortune take the whole of the Peak Downs to construct that railway, which does not benefit the Peak Downs at all? Does the honorable the Premier, or any member of the Ministry know anything about the country, when they talk about taking the line from Peak Downs to Clermont? The thing is absurd on the face of it! Do they know the distance between Clermont and Broad-sound is only 145 miles, and do they expect that people will go to Clermont *via* Emerald Downs to Rockhampton, a distance of 245 miles, being an extra distance of 100 miles, for the sake of a run on the railway? Talk about handicapping the western settlers with some twenty or twenty-five miles of extra carriage, this, sir, would be handicapping the Clermont people with a vengeance. I say the land in the Peak Downs district is being taken to make a railway in another district altogether. The Peak Downs people have no interest in the railway to Emerald Downs whatever, and I say it is an injustice which I hope will not be done by this House. Talk about settlement! The honorable the Minister for Lands gave us as one of his strongest reasons for introducing this Bill, that it would encourage settlement; but I ask, how is settlement to be encouraged in that portion of the colony if the whole of the Peak Downs is taken to make a railway through a scrub and a swamp? How will people settle down on homesteads, as the honorable the Premier said, in those reserves? What is the use of making a reserve on the Peak Downs, fifty miles away from the railway? I say they are adopting the very best plan to prevent settlement in the North. It is well known that the land on the Peak Downs is the only land between Rockhampton and the Aramac fit for settlement, and if this Bill comes into force, which I sincerely hope it never will, there is no doubt the squatters will buy up the whole of the land, and settlement in the North will be put an end to altogether. But, sir, there is another matter. The Ministry have told us a great deal about their sincerity in bringing forward this railway scheme. Now, sir, the

honorable the Premier pointed to the honorable member for Kennedy as being insincere in voting for a certain railway scheme last year, or some session long ago, and not voting for a similar one now; but even if the honorable member for Kennedy has changed his mind, why it is nothing compared with the way in which the honorable the Premier changes his mind. He would change it every day if it would only suit his purpose. It is well known that he told his constituents one thing, and then came to this House and told us quite another thing, and he would change his opinion every time he got up if he had not that Ministerial statement of his to refer to over and over again, until he has worn it threadbare. But, sir, I was going to point out that the insincerity of the Ministry is shown in this way:—When the Estimates were produced, there was £150,000 put down for a railway to Clermont, but it was not intended to go to Clermont at all, and I taxed the honorable the Premier with it weeks ago, and he said it was put down for a railway direct to Clermont, but afterwards he told me in his own office that he had changed the route. I should like to know, sir, why the Clermont people should be deceived in that way, and why the engineer was not consulted as to the route before the Estimates were prepared? I say the Ministry have departed from the original railway policy they brought down to this House, and which they said they were prepared to stand or fall by, because I maintain the railway to Emerald Downs has no connection with the railway to Clermont for which £150,000 was put down on the Estimates. I do not believe the railway now proposed will ever be used by the Clermont people, and I protest against the railway reserve being placed where it is; and I shall strenuously oppose the whole scheme.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: The honorable member for Maranoa has been the only speaker in this chamber who has gone into the principles of the Bill now under discussion, and he has addressed himself both here and through the columns of the Press to the consideration of the subject in a very comprehensive manner—in such a manner as to indicate a desire to become a public educator of opinion on the merits of the Railway Reserves Bill. The honorable the Attorney-General, referring to the matter the other evening, answered many of the arguments of that honorable member completely; but unfortunately he had not the advantage of being equally reported with that honorable gentleman; and I merely rise now for the purpose of making a few remarks in connection with the views which have been promulgated by the honorable member for Maranoa, as well as in connection with the opinions which have been expressed by some honorable gentlemen this evening. I think many honorable gentlemen, in addressing themselves to the question, while approving of the princi-

ples of the Bill, allow the apprehension of its operation to deter them from giving it their impartial assent. I believe it will be admitted that in a country in which the revenue is insufficient to defray the cost of the construction of public works, that in providing for such public works, three courses are open. The first is that generally resorted to, to borrow money outside the country for the construction of such public works; the second principle is to pay for the construction of such works in that commodity of which the country possesses the greatest abundance, and which can be parted with with the least disadvantage of exchange; and the third principle is to realise or provide out of that commodity a sinking fund, by which the cost of the construction of those works can be liquidated. Now, Mr. Speaker, the first course is that which is generally resorted to by colonial financiers, and I have no doubt it has been resorted to chiefly because it is more easy to accomplish than any of the other means. So long as the country is in good credit, then it is easier to borrow money for the purpose of constructing public works than to have recourse to either of the other methods I have referred to, and it has also this advantage—that it confers a certain amount of popularity on the Government of the day that enters into the construction of public works on such a system, by giving them command of large expenditure, and consequent political influence and power which attaches to large public disbursements. In addition to these, it creates a certain amount of prosperity for the time being, and is regarded generally as synonymous with prosperity. That is to say: when a Government commits itself to the borrowing of money for the purpose of public works, people naturally regard it as a time of general prosperity in the community; but there is no doubt it has been attended with the disadvantage of establishing a perpetual drain upon the resources of the country in the shape of interest on such loans, and whether good times or bad times visit the country thereafter, that interest has to be met, and when the revenue of the country is not sufficiently elastic to provide for it, those gradually increasing demands must in times of depression provide the basis of a deficiency. Accordingly we find so soon as one loan is exhausted by the Government immediately it is in contemplation to enter into another, simply in consequence of the necessity of keeping up a high-pressure speed of expenditure to maintain that popularity which the disbursement of large sums of public money confers upon the Government of the day. Now, as I have already stated, so long as the country is in good credit at home, and can place its debentures advantageously, so long is this system likely to be continued. But, sir, there must be a limit to the power of borrowing, and if loans should accumulate with greater rapidity than the population or the revenue of the country advances, it must in-

evitably, sooner or later, result in stopping the credit of that country, and some other mode of constructing its public works must be resorted to. I do not think we have yet arrived at that condition, but we have an example of it in one of the finest colonies in the Australian group, which has almost exhausted its borrowing powers. That is to say, its borrowing powers are restricted by the loans which it now seeks to obtain in the London market being looked upon with comparative disfavor on account of the large amount of debt it has already accumulated; and I think if we take into consideration our position, and contrast it with that of the neighboring colonies, we shall see that we ought to be extremely chary in committing ourselves to any very large amount of loan until we see the country is making greater strides in population and revenue than it appears to have accomplished during the last three or four years. We find, sir, that with our population of 173,000 souls, we have a public debt at the present time of seven millions, which will be increased under the Loan Estimates now submitted to this Chamber to nearly nine millions, or considerably over £40 per head of the population. In proportion to our population, we have a larger public debt than any other of the Australian colonies, and I think that should point out to us the undesirability of unnecessarily increasing that amount of public debt if we can possibly resort to any other means to accomplish the same object—that is to say, the construction of public works by any other means than that of borrowing. All the speakers, on both sides of the House, during this debate, have been unanimously of opinion that the construction of railways is desirable; in fact, that we are only commencing a system which ultimately must be extended to much greater dimensions than it has attained at the present time. I, myself, believe that in the course of ten or twenty years, railways, which we now regard to a certain extent as luxuries, will be looked upon as absolute necessities for the settlement and opening up of the country. But there are many considerations which will have to be regarded before this is likely to take place, and one of these will be economy of construction, which will have to be proven before an extensive system of railway communication is likely to be carried out, notwithstanding that railways will have to be provided for the growing wants of settlement and population. The question then comes, how are these railways to be constructed? I have already alluded to the undesirability of adding, at the present time, unnecessarily largely to our rapidly increasing public debt, and have urged that we should not resort to that method, if any other be at all practicable. When we look at the returns of the railways throughout the Australian colonies, we find some interesting facts: in the colony of Victoria, with a population of 823,000 people, there is an annual deficiency on the working

of its railways of £242,000; in New South Wales, with a population of 606,000 people, there is an annual deficiency in the working of its railways of £90,000; in Queensland, with a population of 173,000 people, there is a deficiency of £160,000.

Mr. WALSH: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not look upon these figures in the same light possibly as the honorable member for Warrego, and I do not feel much encouraged by his applause, because, no doubt, his argument is that railways are altogether unnecessary, and undesirable here; that, however, I do not believe, and that is not what I wish to show; what I wish to show is, that until the country is more largely settled, railways will entail upon our annual revenue a considerable loss until the circumstances are altered.

Mr. WALSH: Hear, hear. That is exactly what I meant.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I produced these figures for the purpose of showing that we must not trust to loans simply, and the consequent interest to be paid solely out of revenue. The second mode of construction is one which meets with favor in many quarters, namely, the mode of constructing public works by paying the contractor in that commodity of which the country has the greatest abundance, and that with us is land; but, as you yourself have pointed out, sir, in a previous discussion on a similar principle to that which is contained in this Bill, the principle is attended with the great disadvantage that the country which resorts to it must necessarily pay more for the construction of its public works than by paying in cash. A contractor must doubtless add to the legitimate profit of his contract a certain amount for the risk of converting his payment into money, for the delay which will accrue in realising it, and for the expenses consequent upon financing during the process of construction. The third method may therefore be considered, namely, that the country which possesses a certain commodity in abundance, and has that commodity at its disposal, and can part with that commodity with least disadvantage, will act wisely by selling it, and providing funds for the construction of public works. At the present time, our land revenue, which is annually increasing, is imperceptibly absorbed in connection with public expenditure, and the colony is actually receiving no tangible benefit from the alienation of our Crown lands. By the principle which this Bill introduces, certain areas of territory are set apart, out of the proceeds of which the public works constructed in the locality are provided for; and although it may not be—as the honorable member for Dalby said the other evening, in reply to the honorable the Colonial Secretary—necessary to pay off the debt which has been increased for the construction of such public works, when they

themselves become remunerative, and provide for the interest consequent upon their construction—although it may not be absolutely desirable to relieve the public creditor, it is desirable that the money be recouped to the Treasury, that it may be employed in fresh works; otherwise, if it were not regarded as probable that the lands would ultimately defray the cost of construction, we might immediately go into the market and borrow on the principle of the honorable member for Maranoa. But the reserves which are set apart will doubtless be realised from time to time, and their realisation will provide sufficient funds, not only for the cost of construction, but for the interest consequent upon such amounts as may have to be borrowed to proceed with the works of construction, and it is in that light that speakers on this side of the House have dwelt upon the desirability of these reserves being held to extinguish the capital debt—not, however, that when the lands are realised the debt should be wiped off; but that the proceeds may be employed in fresh works, and thereby prevent the accumulation of the public debt, which would have to be increased to carry out other public works in the colony. The objection taken by the honorable member for Maranoa is doubtless a very startling one in the position in which he chose to place it; but honorable members in Opposition have doubtless the right to find out the most vulnerable parts of the Bill, and to magnify them for their own purposes. The honorable member accordingly dwelt upon the alarming consequences that would accrue to the community supposing capital were invested in these lines, and withdrawn from legitimate pursuits. That would be a dreadful calamity indeed, only there is that little word “if” that prevents any reasonable man being apprehensive that such a thing would really take place. In the first place, the lands are not placed in the market under such facilities of acquisition as lands under the Crown Lands Alienation Act, and consequently men in this colony who are most likely to invest and take up land, would naturally do so under that law which gives them the greatest facility of acquirement. The Railway Reserves Bill applies more to a class of monied men than the Crown Lands Alienation Act does. It is essentially a Bill introduced for a financial object, and with the view to obtain by the realisation of lands in such reserves as large an amount of funds as possible for the object for which the Bill is presented; and I would point out that while honorable members have referred to the probability of large amounts of money being introduced into the colony from the outside for the purchase of these lands, they have omitted to dwell upon another feature which, I think, we shall really see accomplished; and that is, that the placing of these lands in the market will introduce a class of settlers into the colony

possessed of capital, such as are not likely to be attracted by the Crown Lands Alienation Act. The Western Railway Reserves Bill will doubtless attract men with means who would not care for encumbering themselves with the restrictions which hedge round settlers under the Crown Lands Alienation Act, and I am convinced, from that view of the case alone, we shall see the passing of the Bill into law accompanied by an influx of capital that will bring about a prosperous and very hopeful state of affairs. The honorable member for the Kennedy ridiculed the railway to Charters Towers, and said it was not introduced until the Government found themselves in a fix. I need hardly take up the time of the House to reply to this, except to refer him to the Loan Estimates of last year, where a survey of the line was authorised, and consequent upon that survey, it was the evident intention of the Legislature, by their approval of it, to carry the project into effect. The honorable member for the Kennedy doubts the sincerity of the present Government with respect to this railway. Well, sir, I do not think he has any reason to doubt the sincerity of the Government in desiring to construct this railway. His suspicions, I think, might be confined to honorable members sitting nearer him, because I think I have myself heard the honorable member for Maranoa strongly object to a former Government being asked to consider the construction of a railway from Charters Towers to Townsville.

Mr. McILWRAITH: When?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In the office of the Lands and Works, when I was in office there; and I do not think he has become a convert lately to the construction of that line, even on the loan principle, in which he is such a believer. The honorable member for Maranoa states that in borrowing, the whole credit of the colony is pledged to indemnify the public creditor; but, sir, I maintain that the public faith is not interfered with by this Bill. The whole credit of the colony is pledged to the public creditor, but provision is made for seeing not only that this public faith is redeemed by the provision made in this Bill, but also that the land revenue of the colony, which up to the present time has been frittered away in general disbursements, is specially conserved for the former object. Under this Bill, I say the land revenue of the colony is directed to those public works which for many years to come will require to be constructed throughout the colony. If railways, therefore, are to be constructed at all—and I for one believe they ought to be constructed—I contend that some principle other than that of borrowing money pure and simple will have to be resorted to. I detect a smile upon the countenance of the honorable member for Kennedy, and no doubt he smiles because he thinks what I am saying is in direct contradiction to what I stated to

my constituents three or four months ago. If the honorable member did me the justice to read further into my speech on that occasion, he would have seen that I did not stultify myself at all. At that time the Cabinet had not had an opportunity of meeting, and the Government had not sufficient information before them to warrant them in going on with public works this session; and what I said was this, that they intended in a session to be held early next year to have full and reliable plans of railway construction by which railway extension could be proceeded with, and I do not see that I am in the slightest degree laying myself open to the charge of contradiction by advocating, as I do now, the construction of public works throughout the colony which are now required, and which will be required for many years to come. The honorable member for Maranoa, also, in the course of his remarks, referred to the undesirableness of a railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe. He was answered pretty well by the honorable member for Carnarvon; but in reading the report of Mr. Rae, the Commissioner of Railways in New South Wales, I was very much struck with a recommendation he made, which appeared to be peculiarly applicable to the circumstances of this colony, and was a strong argument in favor of the extension of our main trunk line of railway to the Border. In his report, Mr. Commissioner Rae says:—

“It is worthy of notice that, although the number of sheep in this colony is more than double the number in Victoria, yet from her geographical position, and in consequence of our railways not having as yet been extended to the Riverina District, a large proportion of the wool and produce of this rich and extensive portion of our territory is carried by the railways of Victoria. In 1874, the number of sheep in the two colonies was as under:—

New South Wales...	28,872,882
Victoria ...	11,225,206

And yet the number of bales carried on our railways was only 90,128, for which £28,702 was received for haulage, while on the Victorian railways 238,152 bales were carried, and £50,512 received. The average weight per bale of wool in grease is about 4½ cwt. in New South Wales, and 3½ cwt. in Victoria; and of washed wool, 3 cwt. in the former, and 2½ cwt. in the latter.”

Now, sir, I think, if the words Queensland were introduced for New South Wales, and New South Wales introduced for Victoria, that recommendation would be exactly apposite to our own circumstances with regard to the extension of the Stanthorpe Railway. And now, sir, I come to the chief point of the honorable member for Maranoa's argument, and it is, as usual, a very formidable one in appearance. The honorable member states that the total land revenue of the colony amounts to £226,000 at the present time, and if the system which is affirmed in this Bill be carried out, the whole of this money will be utterly annihilated for revenue purposes.



The honorable member for Maranoa always likes to put an extreme case, and has not failed to do so now. The £226,000 of land revenue at the present time represents land revenue from every conceivable source entirely outside of the lands in the railway reserves.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I never referred to anything of the kind in the speech I delivered here the other night; but if the honorable member is referring to anything I have written in the papers, let him quote the whole of it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am quoting the figures, and I believe they were introduced in a letter the honorable member published in the *Brisbane Courier*; but I am, generally speaking, putting them in the light in which he placed them. He said that £226,000 was the total of the land revenue of the colony to which the Treasurer could look. I introduce this subject here, because I do not feel disposed to reply, through the columns of the Press, to the arguments and statements of the honorable member, and because it is quite pertinent to the subject in hand. I would remind the honorable member that the total area of land which is referred to in the intended railway reserves, does not exceed, as stated by my honorable colleague, the Minister for Lands, 15,000,000 of acres. My honorable colleague has also stated that the cost of construction of these lines would probably amount to £2,200,000—say in round numbers  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions, and to provide for the construction of these railways 5,000,000 of acres of land at 10s. per acre would have to be sold; but the profit of these lands as revenue will not be lost or withdrawn in any way until they are actually sold. The honorable member does not choose to consider that at all.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I must interrupt the honorable gentleman. If the honorable member wishes to reply to the arguments I have used in a newspaper, let him state them properly. I never used such an argument as he states at all.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not wish to intrude unnecessarily upon a newspaper article, nor do I wish to distort an argument, but I challenge him to deny the fact that he said if the principle of this Bill were affirmed, £226,000 would be lost to the Treasury.

Mr. McILWRAITH: No, no.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have read the letter very carefully, and the honorable member goes so far as to contend that by the principle of this Bill the Treasury is prejudiced. I want to show that the Treasury is not prejudiced. From the statement of my honorable colleague, the Minister for Lands, 5,000,000 acres of land would have to be realised at 10s. per acre to produce the capital necessary for the construction of these lines of railway. At the present time, what do these 5,000,000 acres produce to the revenue? Something under £5,000 per annum. What would be the annual interest of the debt you

would have to incur for the construction of these railways under the pure and simple loan system? At 4 per cent.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions of money would cost £100,000 per annum. But, as I have already pointed out, these lands are not lost to revenue purposes to the Treasury until they are actually sold, and I again contend, when the lands are sold, for we do not suppose they will remain depopulated, there will be settlement upon them, and when these lands change occupation and are occupied, as I fully believe they must be by more human beings than under the present tenure, I look to a large increase of Customs duties and other income to the general revenue, and in this light alone it is but a fair supposition that when the lands do change their present tenure and become settled upon, a large increase of general revenue may be expected. I have, I think, shown that while the Treasury may expect to sustain a loss of £5,000 derived now from the sale of lands required for the reserves, and £100,000 will have to be paid for interest on the money borrowed, we gain a large increase of general revenue by changing the tenure of these lands, and affording extra facilities for settlement. This question can hardly be viewed apart from the question of immigration. The honorable member for Maranoa is, I think, a strong advocate for immigration. Now if we wish to encourage immigration, I think it is but right we should show those whom we desire to attract to our shores, that they will be placed in a prosperous condition, and will not have to contribute more than their fair share to the taxation of the country. The principle which this Bill affirms is one that does not oppress the laboring classes as heavily as borrowing money would do, for I contend, that by borrowing money for the construction of railways, we are adding disproportionately to the burden of taxation which at the present time is borne by the laboring and industrial classes of this colony; they contribute more than their fair share and proportion of that taxation, and the principle of borrowing fresh loans and recovering it by taxation upon the masses of the population, directly contravenes one of the first principles of political economy promulgated by Adam Smith, and assented to by all subsequent writers on political economy, namely, that the citizens of every State ought to contribute to the maintenance of the government of that State in proportion to their several abilities, or in proportion to the revenue which they enjoy under the protection of such Government. That principle is completely set at naught, and it will be more thoroughly violated if we persist in the principle inculcated by the honorable member for Maranoa, that all our public works are to be undertaken by borrowing money introduced into the country for the purpose of producing an inflated prosperity, thereby adding to the taxation under which the laboring classes suffer at the present time. Now, sir, there has been some capital sought to

be introduced against this Bill on account of the form and extent of these reserves, but I am quite content to say that the reserves will be open to amendment when the Bill is in committee. These reserves in no way affect the principle of the Bill, and I am not introducing any novel doctrine in making this statement, for honorable members will admit that when you, sir, introduced the Western Railway Bill, the schedule of it was altered from its original form, and if it is shown that these reserves are not made out in the most desirable form, it will be the duty of the Government to accept any amendment, provided the principle of the Bill is not set aside, and a sufficient area is set apart for the purposes of this Bill. The honorable member for Clermont, I think, made some remarks about the line to Aramac; he is more conversant with that part of the country than I am, but I cannot forget that it is only a few nights ago that the honorable member for Port Curtis ridiculed a railway line to Aramac on the ground that it consisted only of two stations and a bit of another. The honorable member for Kennedy also commented upon the limited area of land taken up since Separation, and triumphantly pointed out that as far as the financial part of the question was concerned, the Government could not expect a large amount of success from the experience of former years; but the honorable member should have recollected that land taken up under this Bill, will be taken up under entirely dissimilar circumstances, and that the throwing open of these large reserves can in no way be gauged by the amount of land taken up under the Crown Lands Alienation Act. By that Act men of humble means were offered the opportunity of taking up a selection, and they would not take up more than they could afford to cultivate or utilise; but this Bill, being introduced as a financial measure, will attract a different class of people, men with large capital, who will take up large tracts of country, and will turn them to a very different purpose from that of the small selection men, as they will be able to do, having large means at their disposal. I consider, sir, that if we wish to give encouragement to immigration proper—if we wish to see increased facilities given to settlement—above all, if we wish to see large public works proceeded with, which are not only necessary now but will be more so every year—if we want to see this colony flourish, it is our duty to consent to the principle enunciated in this Bill. I will also point out that there can be no possible injury inflicted by passing this Bill, for if the Western Railway is not a success, this measure will simply remain inoperative. The Government do not wish to proceed with the resumption of lands under this Bill for the purpose of annoying the pastoral lessees unless they see that the lands resumed can be alienated, and as I trust, more profitably occupied. I must say that the honorable member for Maranoa,

who has directed a very large and earnest amount of attention to this Bill, has enunciated views which might emanate from a bank-parlor, but which is not that broad statesmanlike policy which would have regard to the opening-up of the country, and making provision for such works as are, from time to time, required, and which would direct the attention of that redundant amount of industrial labor which exists at home to the prosperous and remunerative field for their employment which is presented here, and which the Bill now under consideration tends to encourage. We cannot do anything that will tend more to attract the attention of the industrial working classes at home, whom we are so anxious to have settled in this country. I do hope that this Bill will be approved by a considerable majority of this House, and that the anticipations which I have, reasonably I think, formed of it will not be disappointed.

Mr. HALY said: Sir, I rise to say that I am a consistent opponent of the present mania for extravagant railway construction, and I am the more confirmed in this opinion by the speech I have just heard from the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. That honorable gentleman has told us most unmistakeably that the railways in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland have not paid, and I want to show that, although Victoria has carried a great deal of the New South Wales traffic, she has had £240,000 to refund, which plainly shows that she has carried out a most extravagant system of railways, and has more to pay, than New South Wales, which has not been so extravagant, and has about £90,000 to pay, although she has given Victoria a great deal of her carriage besides. This is the whole argument for those colonies, and then we come to Queensland, and what do we find here? Why, that she has been a great loser by her railways. Now, is it likely that we shall get men with capital from Victoria or New South Wales to come here and buy our lands for the purpose of having railways constructed, when we find that during the last nine years Victoria has increased the number of her sheep by twenty per cent., and New South Wales by 200 per cent., whilst Queensland, during the same period, has shown a considerable decrease? There is no doubt, sir, that we have less sheep than we had nine years ago, at least 200,000 less, and therefore, to expect capitalists to come from Victoria or New South Wales to purchase our land which it has been shown will not produce sheep to the same extent as formerly, is one of the greatest fallacies I have ever heard uttered in this House. The House must excuse me for paying more attention to these pastoral matters, but I do so because I think every man should stick to his own business. With that decrease before them, surely the honorable Treasurer cannot expect men to come here to take up large areas of land where the people who got that land so cheaply cannot pro-

duce sheep to advantage. Therefore, his whole argument about inducing capitalists to come from New South Wales and Victoria to lay out their money here, is absurd. People who have capital do not lay it out until they have taken good care to see how the colony is flourishing. Then we come to the small man, the man of 5,000 acres; it is supposed that he will turn grazier, and to feed the railways, he must do so. Well, supposing he commences sheep-farming—as all my experience in New South Wales and Queensland goes to prove that it takes ten acres to run one sheep to keep it in good health, he could only commence with 500 sheep, and at the end of the first year, taking the average price of wool in the grease, for he would not go to the expense of washing, at sixpence per lb., which is more than it is worth, that would only give him for 3,000 lbs. the enormous amount of £75 for his 5,000 acres. Next year, he might have 700 sheep, which might give him 4,200 lbs. of greasy wool, which, at 6d. a lb., would be £105, and as he must sell 200 sheep if he wishes to keep his stock healthy, they, at 6s. a head, would bring in £60 more, so that at the end of the second year he would have £165 to support himself and his family. That is all he would get in return for the capital of £3,500 which he must have to purchase his land and sheep, and make the necessary improvements; and I think honorable members will say that that is a very undesirable result for such a large outlay. I may say this, that if the Government will carry out a cheap system of railways, combined with irrigation, this small grazier would increase his returns by at least 20 per cent., or thereabouts; for I am quite positive, with the short summer in America, I have seen an increase of 20 per cent. brought about through irrigation. I know that honorable members will think that I have irrigation on the brain; they used to tell me that I had worms on the brain, but I am confident that the colony will be ruined unless irrigation is carried on with cheap railways; if both are carried on together, it will be one of the finest colonies under the sun. As we are going on now, we must sell the land to make the railways, and it will be found in the course of a few years, when there is a drought, that people will throw up the land, and nothing will be produced. Sir, we must, then, have irrigation, and it will be found advisable to buy back the land from the men who have bought it, at their own price, if steps are not taken to commence a system of irrigation with our railways; and I can assure the honorable Treasurer, that if I saw the least chance of carrying out a scheme of irrigation with railways, I should be glad to give up my station, which comprises 400 square miles, for 6,000 acres under irrigation; I am positive, by so doing, I should be a happier and a richer man, for I should feel that as long as my family lived, they could be supported on that 6,000 acres

of land. You might have travelled over a hundred miles of Liverpool Plains a few years ago and have seen no more grass than there is in this building, and I have seen cattle there nothing but skin and bone, and when I hobbled out my horse, I looked out for an apple-tree or a swampy-oak for him. It is very well for people who know nothing of these things to talk about what a flourishing colony this is, but in this colony I have seen creeks that at one time had water rushing down them, and had waterholes with thirty-three feet of water in them, perfectly dry, and when we get such seasons as this, then people will think a little more of the importance of irrigation. I expect a great many men who laughed at me when I talked about such things have not a sheep to their name now. I saw it coming, but what was the use of my talking? I am not a good speaker, but I have my experience, and I give it for what it is worth, and I say nothing that is not founded upon my experience in New South Wales and Queensland. Nine years ago, I saw in Victoria a flourishing lot of squatters worth their £20,000 and £30,000 a-year. I then told them that they were destroying the colony as quickly as possible, and what did they do? Why, when their natural grasses failed they put in English grass. I asked them what that grass had done for England, and I said, "I am not going to argue with you who are making your £20,000 a-year, but if you live threescore years you will repent it." I am sorry to say, sir, that fifteen months ago, Mr. Bell wrote to me to say that where the English grasses were most cultivated, there was most disease. I do not care what people say of me, but if they will only look at some of the papers I have read in this House from Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand, they would see that where English grasses have been most used there has been most disease. About four years ago I killed bullocks, in a district thought very little of as a fattening country, weighing 14 cwt.; and I sent down sheep which, when boiled down, gave 25lbs. of fat. That I do not think can be done on the far-famed Darling Downs. We never thought of railways in the old times, and I ask whether they have increased the weight of our sheep, or whether they have made meat cheaper in this town? I say they have not, nor have they made it cheaper in Victoria; for not long ago £20 was paid for a bullock for which, before the railways were made, people would have considered themselves lucky if they got £3. I am sorry, sir, to take up the time of the House, because I know that anything I may say will have very little effect, but the time will come when it will be found that these railways will bring the colony into debt—that they will not bring any benefit to it, that they will not make meat cheaper to the working man, but dearer. I should not have mentioned this at all, but the honorable the Treasurer actually dragged

the poor man into his speech. I say that the best thing for the poor man would be to get his meat at a penny halfpenny a-pound rather than his loaf at a penny; for any man, wishing his family to grow up healthy, must make them consume as much meat as bread. If these railways were to bring cheap meat and bread to the poor man, I could fancy the honorable member bringing him into his speech; but I say that although you may tax the rich man to make these railways, it will come on to the poor man's back afterwards, and if there is not the money to pay the poor man, then his wages must come down. I have seen them come down to £18 a-year—I can remember all these things—and I should not like to see such a state of things again. I heard a great deal about railways, and the population and wealth that would follow the construction of one to the Darling Downs; but did it do so? Did it not rather bring down hundreds of starving men down to Brisbane with the intention of rushing Government House? Had we not to establish relief camps to find those men food for their families? And such will be the case again perhaps. This is a railway mania to get men to the colony who having spent £3,500 to get 5,000 acres of land and put some improvements upon it, will receive at the end of the year £163 for the support of themselves and their families. Can any man get up and show me that such a man can do better with his 5,000 acres of land; you may talk about the Darling Downs, but I say that it takes 10 acres to a sheep on those Downs. No man would be more delighted than I should be to see railways, and if the Treasurer will say that we can get them made for £3,000 a-mile, I should not object to them so much, but I am positive that when the line is completed to Roma, it will be found to have cost nearer £8,000 a-mile, I am as positive of it as I am sitting in this House. I told honorable members when I voted against that extravagant railway from Brisbane to Ipswich, it would cost nearer half-a-million of money than any other amount, and I believe my words have come pretty well true. I only hope the Government, before they pledge themselves to these railways—before they commit the country to the construction of extravagant railways, they will pause in the matter; and even now, at this hour, withdraw this Bill, which is certain, instead of increasing the wealth of the colony, to bring destruction upon it.

Mr. GROOM said: In the interests of the country, sir, I am quite aware of the importance of the subject before the House. In fact, I may say, sir, I do not think a more important subject has been introduced by this Government, or any other Government for a long time, and it is a subject which honorable members ought to give serious attention to before being called upon to record their votes on this question. I have given the subject very grave and very serious consideration, such as I consider its importance deserves,

and I cannot, as an old member of the House, forget the early days when the colony was rushed into a railway system. I cannot forget this fact, sir, that for want of proper information being laid upon the table of the House—for want of competent engineers to make the necessary surveys of the different routes of the railways then entered upon, the country has been committed to almost unlimited expenditure; and that the debt we hear so much about, and the interest we are now called upon to pay, is entirely attributable to the hasty rashness of our early legislation in connection with a railway policy. If that is the case, I say it becomes a duty, in considering the Railway Reserves Bill now before the House, for honorable members to give careful attention to it, and to take care that we shall not be led into similar errors again. Now, I must confess, that of all the speeches I have heard on this measure since its introduction by the Government, the most damaging speech has been made by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer himself; and I frankly confess I was somewhat surprised at that speech, because I was under the impression that the honorable gentleman was about to reply to the arguments adduced by the honorable member for Maranoa, and that he would bring forward something like arguments to show the honorable member he was mistaken in his arguments, and the views he had taken, and that the Government were justified in tendering it as their policy. But, sir, instead of the honorable the Colonial Treasurer confuting the arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa, he proceeded to show how railways in New South Wales and Victoria had practically proved a failure, and that, as far as our own railways are concerned at the present time, we were losing £160,000 a-year. Why, sir, a stronger argument in favor of the discontinuance of a policy of railway extension until the colony was in a better position to afford it, could not be advanced than that brought forward by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer. I confess, if I had been arguing, I could adduce some very strong reasons why a railway policy should be sanctioned by this House—much stronger than those advanced by the honorable the Treasurer, and I must say, that when I was listening to the speech of that honorable gentleman, I could not help thinking there is not a unanimity of opinion on the Treasury benches with regard to this Bill, because the speech of the honorable the Minister for Lands was of such a sanguine character, and held out such high expectations as to what was likely to result to the colony from the carrying out of this Bill, that when I came to compare it with what the honorable the Treasurer pointed out was likely to accrue from railway construction, I began to think, that after all, the speech of the honorable the Treasurer before his constituents was the true policy of the Government—that is, rest and caution until the

colony was more advanced for railway construction. Now, as far as the principle of railway reserves is concerned, I confess I see no great objection to it; but I, for one, do take very decided objection to the Government exciting in the public mind an undue anxiety to purchase land. I consider it would be ruinous to this colony for the Government to rush a large quantity of land into the market for sale for the purpose of raising funds to construct railways or other public works in the present condition of the colony. Why, sir, in the comparative statement of the consolidated revenue, issued by the Treasurer no later than last Saturday, which I think ought to be a very correct index of the prosperity of the country, I find that there is, practically, a deficiency so far as the revenue is concerned; and although it only shows a small deficiency of something like £226, if we deduct the £8,000 which has accrued from the large influx of Chinese to Cooktown, then there is a deficiency, during the quarter, of something like £8,000 or £9,000. That indicates to me what we have heard for some time, that there are premonitory symptoms of a crisis. It may not be a very severe one, but it certainly indicates a crisis. And in looking over the bank returns, what do I find? There sir, I find that the notes in circulation amount to £336,497; the deposits in the banks amount to £2,896,568, so that the amount due by the banks to the colony is £3,233,065. But against that, sir, there are discounts and advances by the banks to the colony, £3,147,437, showing that the colony has only advanced to the banks in reality £83,628; and I say, if you accept the policy of the Western Railway Act, and rush five million acres of land into the market for sale, the banks must advance capital to purchase that land, and the result will be that the banks will be compelled to restrict discounts, and in this way we shall be taking the very course to facilitate a commercial crisis. I do not attach any importance to the statement that we are going to have a large influx of young men of capital who will purchase land in these railway reserves. I can well remember when the honorable member for Rockhampton introduced the Land Act of 1868, assisted by Mr. Fitzgerald, the same thing was promulgated on the floor of this House. We were told that we should have a large number of young men coming to the colony, with capital to invest in land, which was to be the panacea for all the evils that Queensland had been suffering under; but what did the honorable the Minister for Lands tell us a short time ago?—that he did not believe the Land Act of 1868 had been the means of settling more than ten or a dozen of those young men in the country. And if the Land Act of 1868, which proposed to give land away—7,560 acres being the maximum area of second-class pastoral land, with ten years to pay for it at sixpence an acre—if

that was not an inducement to those young men to settle in the colony, I do not believe they will be likely to invest in freeholds at ten shillings an acre, as proposed in this Railway Reserves Bill. I do not attach much importance to that, and my own impression is, that the idea that young men of capital will come here to buy land is a perfect myth. Then, nothing has been said with regard to the present occupiers of those lands. Would any one suppose that a large holder of land in the Western district, through which the railway will pass, would allow men to come here and buy land under his nose when he could make arrangements with his bank to buy up the whole of it? That would be the result of it. I read the other day that there is an agitation at Roma at the present time to have the land in the Western Railway Reserve sold in that town instead of Brisbane, and it is simply because they know the choice portions, and that it would go into the hands of capitalists, and instead of facilitating settlement, there would be no settlement at all. I have not the slightest objection to the Government setting apart reserves in the districts through which it is proposed to construct these railways—not the slightest in life; but I do maintain that in the present position of the colony it would be a retrograde policy to sell the land for the purpose of constructing railways, when we can go to the English money market and borrow whatever amount we require for their construction. Since the discussion the other evening, I have been reading very carefully a work by the Right Honorable James Wilson, a standard authority on capital, currency, and banking, and I find he points out in 1845, at the time of the great commercial crisis when railways had eaten up millions and hundreds of millions of capital in England—I find that even then the accumulated capital in Great Britain, with the interest or the profits arising from the capital invested, amounted to £45,000,000 annually; and I find from another authority of more recent date, that in 1874 the accumulated capital in Great Britain amounted to something like £90,000,000 a-year. Now, will any one tell me that English capitalists, who have money to invest, would not twenty times sooner invest it in a colony like this than in Peruvian, Egyptian, or Turkish bonds? It is perfectly absurd to say that our credit would be damaged if we went in for a new loan. It may be quite possible for the honorable gentleman to quote the colony of New Zealand, where they had a Premier who evidently had his own ends to gain, and went to England in search of his knighthood, and as soon as he attained his object—after having got the colony in debt to the extent of seventeen millions—he turned his back on it, and will now no doubt live in state in England as Agent-General. There is no doubt the English capitalists would not be disposed to lend money to a colony like that, which has gone to most extravagant expenditure without con-

sidering the consequences ; but in a colony like this, where I, for one, rejoice to say we have a strong and vigorous Opposition, who are prepared to restrict expenditure of that kind, I say the English capitalist will not have the slightest uneasiness in lending to the colony whatever money it may require. And if we look at South Australia, what has been the policy there with regard to public works? We find that the late Premier was prepared to go in for a bridge across the Murray, and railways in different directions, something like what is proposed by the present Government here, and he proposed to go into the market and borrow £2,500,000 for the purpose of carrying out those public works, and he was so anxious to inspire confidence in the minds of the English capitalists, that he proposed to impose a stamp duty, the same as we have in this colony, to pay the interest on the capital borrowed. Well, he was defeated by a majority of one in the Upper House upon his public works policy, and the present Government have been obliged, such being the state of public opinion in that colony, to carry out that policy, although not in the same form, without increasing the revenue by the stamp duty, and the measure has been acceptable to that colony. Now, if the South Australians consider they are justified in borrowing to that extent, what is to prevent Queensland doing the same? We shall have large reserves as security for the money that may be advanced to us. We can tell the capitalists we have large areas of land set apart as reserves for the construction of railways, and as soon as the railways are formed, we will be able to sell that land with advantage, and the loan will be recouped in that way. That is a business-like way of carrying out such undertakings; and I sympathise entirely with the principle laid down by the honorable member for Maranoa. I will not say it is a bank-parlor policy; I say it is a sound financial policy for a young colony. But I maintain it would not be a wise policy to withdraw from the banks three millions of money for the purpose of forcing investment in the public lands. There is no necessity for it, and more than that, I contend that until we have the experiment of the Western Railway Act fairly tried, this House has no right to sanction any further experiment of that kind. I should very much like to see an experiment tried under that Act in the shape of a land sale; and while on this point, I may say, that when we are about to construct five or six lines of railway, it is the duty of the Government—as pointed out by the honorable member for Kennedy—to supply the House with some data as to the cost of their construction. We have not had the slightest information on that point, and before I give my adhesion to any one of the lines of railway the Government propose to construct, I must be satisfied that I am

giving my vote for a safe and wise undertaking. I will insist on that, in consequence of the errors we have fallen into before. We have heard from the honorable the Premier, that Queensland at the present time possesses a population of 170,000 souls, and the public debt is something like £40 per head of the population, and what has brought about that debt? Nothing but entering into a railway policy without clearly understanding what we were about. I can quite understand how it occurred. We were informed by our first Chief Engineer, Mr. Fitzgibbon, that the whole line of railway from Ipswich to Toowoomba could be completed for £8,000 a-mile, and we find it has cost £16,000 a-mile, and more. That is why the honorable the Treasurer can tell us the debt of Queensland is £40 per head of the population; and bearing that in mind, I say it would be unwise to enter upon additional railways until full information is given to us with regard to their necessity, and the cost of their construction. This little volume which I hold in my hand, points out exactly the same thing. I do not say that theoretical writers in England ought always to guide us in our deliberations, because I think we ought to exercise our own common sense, and judge of our own necessities by our own circumstances, and what is occurring amongst us. But I say, in a colony which has no navigable rivers, which is almost level country in many places, where access to the interior is almost impossible in extremely wet and dry seasons, and it is difficult to carry on traffic and get supplies, if railways can be constructed cheaply, they are undoubtedly the best mode of transit we could adopt. That, no one can dispute; but at the same time, we may rush too extravagantly into railways, and with the limited population we have, I think it would not be wise to go to extremes too rapidly. This writer remarks:—

“However free we are to admit the advantages of railways as a means of investing the accumulations of the country, it is nevertheless a most essential thing that we should not attempt to carry out those improvements faster than the capital of the country will permit, and perhaps as much so in order that the construction of lines in useful and beneficial positions should not be prevented or rendered impossible for a long period, by the attempt to construct a great many lines in inferior and less important situations. Looking to the development of the system so far, it would be difficult indeed to say in what situation a railway would not be a great benefit, and where it might not ultimately be profitable. But it must be obvious that what would be desirable for an individual to do, if he had sufficient capital, is one thing, and what it is prudent to attempt or possible to do without it, is another thing altogether. So it is exactly with the nation. Much may be desirable that is not possible; and an attempt to do all that even on good grounds appears desirable may prevent even the best part being accomplished; or may so far derange the

application of the capital of the country in other more important and regular channels, as to do much temporary mischief for which even the permanent advantage of railways will not compensate; and which, from the same cause, may prove ruinous to those undertakings themselves—for they cannot injure the public without more immediately injuring the promoters.”

I say that is exactly what would occur here if we were to withdraw capital from the banks to purchase land. We would restrict the operations of banking institutions, and restrict and damage the credit of the colony to a very considerable extent. Now, so far as the railway reserves are concerned, I would desire to point out exactly in what position the Darling Downs stands in relation to those reserves. We have just passed a Crown Lands Alienation Act, which presumably sets apart the whole of the Darling Downs as a homestead area, and the extent of land any person can select in that area is 160 acres; but according to a certain clause of the Act he may make a conditional purchase of 640 acres. But what do we find the Government doing? The Southern Railway Reserve is presumably for the construction of the line to Stanthorpe; but they have taken away a large portion of the Downs, the whole of the commonage of the town of Warwick, the whole of Rosenthal Run, a large portion of Yandilla, and it goes within sixteen miles of the town of Dalby, so that the whole of the land that would be open to conditional purchase is taken away from the Darling Downs and classed as a railway reserve, presumably to be sold at auction at 10s. an acre. That is exactly how we stand in relation to the railway reserve on the Darling Downs; and I confess I am unable to give my adhesion to such a reserve, because it would most undoubtedly have a tendency to restrict settlement. I do not mean to say that if the principle is to be a general one—if the House affirms the principle that throughout the colony railways shall be constructed by the sale of land, that portion of the Darling Downs' lands should not go towards the construction of the Stanthorpe railway; but I should like to know why it should go within sixteen miles of Dalby? Already they have taken 90,000 acres from Jimbour, and 22,000 acres from Cecil Plains in the Western Railway Reserve, and if they take 16,000 or 18,000 acres more from Cecil Plains, from 20,000 to 30,000 acres from Yandilla on this side of the Condamine, to construct the railway from Warwick to the Border, I say the scheme is most unjust as far as that district is concerned, and, in fact, settlement on the Darling Downs will be entirely retarded. The effect will be, that if that land is sold, it will all go into the hands of capitalists. If they take 22,000 acres from Yandilla—I think it is something more—25,000 or 30,000 acres—and offer it for sale at 10s. an acre, without a doubt, Gore

and Co. would purchase every acre of it. It would suit their purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It has fetched more.

Mr. GROOM: If it has brought more, then the small man is unable to buy it. I do not attach any great importance to the small man buying, because, if the land is put up in large blocks, the small man will not be able to buy. Already, we have had experimental sales of land on the Downs; on Cecil Plains and Westbrook, and Felton land has been sold, but the small man has not been able to get it at auction, and it remained until it has been entirely bought up by the owner, who has been able to make arrangements with the banks for the consolidation of his runs. And what has been done there, will be done again all round Warwick and Yandilla, and other parts of the Downs. The owners will make arrangements for the consolidation of their runs, and the whole of the land will pass into the hands of one or two individuals, and not into the hands of the small men. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer said the Government had no objection to a modification of these reserves; and I do not see why the land in those reserves, and even in the Western Railway Reserve, should not be open to conditional purchase as well as homestead selection. What difference can there be, so long as the Government get proper value for the land? If the principle of conditional selection is good, it should be embodied in the railway reserves system just as much as in the case of the lands proposed to be resumed by Parliament, on the motion of the honorable the Minister for Lands. Now, as far as the Bill itself is concerned, I have no particular objection to it. I believe that the principle of reserving land along the lines where we construct railways, is a good one, and I wish it had been adopted in connection with the construction of the line between Ipswich and Toowoomba. Had it been so, I believe a considerable saving would have been the result, and the colony would not be burdened with the heavy debt it has now; and we would not hear the just and reasonable complaint of the honorable member for Kennedy, that the people of the North have to pay the interest on the construction of a railway which is no benefit to them whatever. As far as that principle is concerned, I have no objection to adhere to it; but the construction of the railways is a different question altogether, and I shall reserve to myself the right to take any course of action I may consider necessary or advisable when that question comes before the House; and I warn the Government now, not only on my own part, but for several other honorable members as well, that before we can give our adhesion to making any of the lines of railway now proposed to be constructed, we must have evidence before us to show that those lines are absolutely necessary for the public benefit,

and the general advancement of the colony. I do not believe in encouraging immigration for the mere purpose of placing men on the public works of the colony. If I understand the question of immigration rightly, it is to settle people on the public lands, and make them permanent colonists, and not a mere ephemeral kind of immigration, by employing people on public works, and they are here to-day and gone to-morrow. We have had enough of immigration of that description for years. We had a lamentable exhibition of it when men after being discharged from the works in connection with the Toowoomba Railway in 1866, came down here, and almost made an attack on the Government House under the belief that they had been deluded to the colony under false pretences. I say there is no necessity for repeating any schemes of that sort. If immigration is to be continued, I hope a well-digested and well-founded scheme will be established, not merely to employ men on public works, but to settle them on the lands so that they may become permanent colonists. I have no doubt the Government will be able to make out a just case for the construction of these lines of railway. I presume they have not placed large sums on the Loan Estimates without being prepared to justify the course they have taken, and to show that this course is necessary to advance the prosperity of the colony. If they make out a good case, I shall have no objection to give them my support; but I am not going to be led into what the honorable member for East Moreton termed a bogus scheme of railways. I do not forget the words of warning which fell from the late Treasurer. I know they were in some respects calculated to mislead some honorable members; but there is no doubt that, as a financier, that gentleman was one of the best Treasurers we ever had, and that warning was that some of these proposed railways were bogus schemes. It may be that he made an assertion which is not a fact, and the Government may show these railways are necessary to open up the resources of the colony, because, I take it, the main object to be aimed at in the construction of railways is the development of those resources. And if it can be shown that the construction of any one of these railways will develop the resources of the district through which it passes, I shall have no objection to give my support to the Government to carry it out. But it must be on the principle that the money shall be borrowed in the English market, and not by the undue sale of the public lands. I consider the Government are the trustees of the people, so far as the public lands are concerned, and it is not their business by legislation to encourage a system of gambling in those lands, and I say by placing them in the market and offering them in large areas at certain intervals of time would be inducing gambling, to the injury, as I said before, of the trade and commerce of the

country by restricting banking operations, and injuring the whole circulation of the colony. I am just as much in favor of a public works policy as the present Government, but I say that any public works policy, if not entered upon with great care and deliberation on the part of this House, would be the means of involving us in serious evils hereafter. The public works policy entered upon in the early history of the colony necessitated, in 1866, the imposition of *ad valorem* duties and stamp duties, and I do not think we ought, by any action of ours, to run the risk of having to resort to additional taxation. The colony is sufficiently taxed already, but I do say it is quite possible to proceed with a judicious system of constructing railways and public works; and the increased value of the land in which those works would be constructed, would itself be sufficient remuneration for the additional cost; and I shall deprecate any additional taxation at the present time, because the people of the colony are sufficiently taxed already under different forms. I have no objection to vote for the second reading of the Bill on the understanding that certain modifications are made in committee, and if those modifications are not made I shall have no objection to join with the honorable members in rejecting the Bill on the third reading.

MR. FRYAR: After the extraordinary statements made, and the extraordinary arguments advanced in discussing this question, one of the most extraordinary being that of the honorable the Premier, I am glad to see that honorable gentleman within hearing, although he is not in his place. The Premier quoted from "Hansard," to show that I opposed a certain amendment last year in reference to homesteads in the railway reserve, and although I have not verified the quotation, he no doubt quoted correctly. I have the Western Railway Act in my hand, and the sub-sections enacted previous to the amendment to which he refers provide that Crown lands in the reserves may be leased, and otherwise alienated under the provisions of the law in force for the time being relating to the selections of homesteads, in township reserves, and so on. We had already provided that we might alienate any quantity of land in these railway reserves as homestead, or in township reserves, which means conditional selection. The words quoted could not have better proved my position. The objection I took was, that we were setting apart two miles on each side of the line, admittedly the very worst land known in the colony—the land from Dalby to Roma;—and, therefore, I said it was no improvement to provide that those four miles of land along the line should be set apart as homesteads, when the Government had the power to set apart any land they choose as homestead or township reserves. I may further improve my position by saying that my first work after the session was closed



last year, was to go up to that railway reserve to look out the best land I could find for township and homestead reserves in the neighborhood of Roma, Surat, the Mitchell Township, Hodgson, and one or two other places. The Premier was, therefore, altogether at sea in giving this as a proof that I had changed my policy since last session. I rise, however, more especially to refer to certain statements made in reply to my own remarks by the Minister for Lands on a former occasion during the discussion of this question. I would not have risen, but for the persistent manner in which I was made by the Minister for Lands to appear as having misunderstood the Bill, in respect to homestead selectors. I think I most distinctly stated that the tin miners around Stanthorpe would not be able to make a selection, unless they were content with the area allowed in a homestead area, and could reside personally, or were prepared to pay cash down for the land. My objections are, that conditional selection is practically annihilated in the settled districts of Moreton, Darling Downs, and Wide Bay and Burnett, from causes altogether apart from this Bill, and that this Bill annihilates that description of selection in the unsettled districts of Darling Downs and the Burnett, as well as that important part of the Central districts included in the Central Reserve, and embracing the settlements at the copper mines in the neighborhood of Clermont and Copperfield. I say that this Bill annihilates conditional selection properly so called, in the South-Western Railway Reserves, where the tin miners of Stanthorpe are resident, as well as in the immediate vicinity of the tin mines of New South Wales; I say it practically annihilates conditional selection in the Burnett district, which is best fitted for selection, so that it is impossible that any mistake could be made in reference to the position which I take up on this question. It is not I that misunderstand the Bill. I never lost sight of the fact, that homestead selectors would be able to select, or I should, as my custom is, have defended the interest of homestead selectors in preference to those of conditional selectors. But, sir, I hold that as much money would have been got for the land by allowing it to be open to conditional selectors, at ten shillings per acre, as is likely to be got at auction, and the slight delay arising from deferred payments, if any, would be more than compensated by the settlement which must take place on the land. I say if any delay in receiving the cash, because I believe far more land will be taken under conditional selection, than it will be possible to sell by auction for cash, and consequently as much money might be received in the early years, and more in the later years, by that method of alienation; besides the greater probability of cultivating a trade for the railways when made. Now, sir, I think there could be, and there can be no mistake

about my position. We ought to bear in mind, that the wealthiest, most populous, most conservative colony of the group, cannot mention a loan, but its debentures go down like a very sensitive barometer. How, then, can we hope to retain our good name, if we either recklessly borrow money, or sell our capital, the land, to construct useless, unprofitable works? No, sir, the whole of the evidence is against the construction of these lines, either by selling the land, or borrowing the money at the present time. And I repeat that a great outcry was made by two members for the Darling Downs, in reference to the sale of a few acres of stony ridges, at three times the upset price intended to be put on the Burnett land, and that honorable members who decry a sale of that kind, and vote for setting apart 30,000,000 acres of the best land in the country, chiefly for sale by auction, do it from no political principle, from no regard for the interests of selectors, and from no regard for the interests of the colony generally, but to secure a passing advantage to their district at the expense of others, and to gain a little popularity regardless of either principle or reason. But, in order further to prove that position, I will give a few facts taken from returns in the hands of honorable members. It appears that, from the first sale of country lands in 1843 up to the end of 1860, a period of 18 years, 106,000 acres of country lands were alienated. The Alienation of Crown Lands Act became law in 1868 and 9; in 1861, the Cotton Regulations were issued; in 1863, the Agricultural Reserve Act was passed; in 1864, the Sugar and Coffee Regulations were promulgated; in 1866, the Leasing Act of that year was passed, so that, during the seven years ending 1867, the total alienation of country lands was 630,000, or six times the area alienated during the previous eighteen years. But, early in 1868, the Crown Lands Act of that year was passed, and as a consequence, the absolute alienations during the eight years ending 1875 have amounted to 1,000,000 acres, whilst there are 3,500,000 more in process of alienation, a great part of that area being well advanced towards that termination. Will it be denied, therefore, that a greater revenue, that is, a greater amount in cash, would be received under conditional selection at ten shillings per acre in ten annual instalments, than is likely to be received by auction sales at that rate as an upset price and cash payments? I believe sir, the reduced price and the deferred payments under the Act of 1868, have not been a total reduction of the cash value of the land, for hundreds of thousands of acres have probably been taken up at a low price and under the system of deferred payments, which never would have been purchased at auction. It may be said that this can be amended in committee, but if so, while the evil regarding exclusion of conditional selections would

be remedied, the evil respecting its bearing on the financial arrangements would be increased. The whole or nearly the whole land revenue which now pays the interest on the public debt will be absorbed to assist in the creation of more debt and the interest on the present, and the additional debt alike will have to be added to the burdens already placed upon the people. I certainly do not see that at the present time we are in a position to raise the money in that way. It has been pointed out by the honorable member for Toowoomba that we are not in a position to stand additional taxation, that the colony is on the eve of a financial crisis, and that consequently we ought to be on our guard, and neither involve ourselves or the colony in any of these works, which will require to be kept up; it is quite possible that we may begin by raising 20 or 30 per cent. of this money and beginning half-a-dozen railways in half-a-dozen different places, without getting any one of them finished, or made so that they may be profitably worked. We have already seen that the Northern Railway stood at 30 miles in length for many years, and never paid its working expenses. If these railways are not to be begun until there is some prospect of getting the amount necessary for their construction from the sales of this land, I confess I would have no great fears of any public debt, because I believe, according to the present state of the markets in the colonies, at any rate, there would be no probability whatever of a sufficiency of land being sold to pay for the making of these railways. I have gone into these figures somewhat before, and will not refer to them again; but I think it is clear enough we are not likely to sell sufficient land either within our own colony, or to the residents of the adjoining colonies, to pay for these railways. It is perfectly well known that the residents in these colonies will not go into the auction room; not that the land is any great price, but nine-tenths of them prefer getting the lands for annual rentals, to paying cash down. Many a man can pay rent at 6d. and 1s. per acre for ten years, who has not the means of paying cash down, and if he has the means it is not to be supposed he will pay down cash for the land when he can keep a part of it for six, eight, or ten years in cattle, the proceeds of which will pay for the land. If a man has a certain amount of money, and puts it out at 10 per cent., the interest itself would pay for the land, and he would have both the capital and the land at the end of ten years. It is therefore, altogether unreasonable to suppose that any man will pay down cash for the land when the bare interest of the money will pay for it. I have argued that these works are not required at the present time, although many honorable members may entertain a different opinion. But there are several minor works which are absolutely necessary for the well-being of the colony, which would cost far less money, and which would be of

far more general benefit. Why, sir, only to-day I received a letter in one case, and a personal application in another, requesting me to accompany deputations to the Minister for Works to-morrow, on questions of road-making and improvement. The fact is, that all over the district I have the honor to represent, the roads have been so thoroughly cut up and destroyed during the late wet weather that it has been absolutely impossible for people to travel from one place to another, and now that they can get about a little they are holding meetings, and considering what is best to be done in reference to this matter of roads. The people will come in wholesale in deputations, to storm the Minister for Works and see whether it is possible to have these roads mended. I do, therefore, contend that it would be far better policy on the part of the Government to mend their ways so that farmers could travel about, instead of going into this gigantic scheme, that will involve millions of money to make railways. There are many inhabitants of districts that have railways, who get no benefit from them. What benefit, for instance, do the electors of East Moreton get from the railway from Goodna to Brisbane? What benefit do the residents of the Bulimba or Logan districts get from the railway? I have no doubt, sir, this important question will be asked on the part of many people in other districts which are soon to receive the benefit of railway construction. But, sir, it is not only on this question of railways, but on the vote for roads which passed this House some time ago, that the question of unequal distribution arose. The districts which have these railways were not content with a single sixpence less than their share of the money voted for roads. The East Moreton district, which was supposed to have had a great deal more than its share, will be found to have a great deal less when the figures are gone into; yet we have to pay the interest on this further expenditure for railways, and make the best we can of ourselves for roads, in common with other districts. It becomes honorable members representing coast districts not only in East Moreton, but in the other districts of the colony where the railways really improve them very little, to see that they get justice in these matters. I am perfectly satisfied that if these railways are gone into, it will take all the money we can raise for many years to come to pay the interest, and in great part pay the working expenses. We have already seen that the expenses have not been paid hitherto by the railways which have been already made. But, sir, reference was made by the Minister for Lands to the Western Railway Act being the work of the late Ministry, and this being only an extension of the principle, and, therefore, I was not justified in condemning it. Why, sir, that is just the reason why I condemn it. The Western Railway Act was complete in itself, and was intended as a trial

—was surrounded with every safeguard, and every assistance to give it a fair trial, and the Ministry resisted every attempt to extend the principle, being desirous that that Act should first have its trial; and I object, sir, that before that trial has been made, another Bill involving far greater issues should be brought forward. But the Western Railway, with the reserve through which it runs, is peculiarly adapted for a trial of this kind: it runs through about 150 miles of almost barren and worthless country, which has little or no value, except what the railway may give to it—it is well into the interior of the country, is a continuation of an existing line, and will give value to millions and tens of millions of acres of land, which at present have little or no value; for it opens out and brings 160 miles nearer the coast, practically speaking, connects all the splendid lands on the main rivers and tributaries of the Balonne, the Warrego, the Paroo, Bulloo, Barcoo, and several other important streams with unpronounceable names, lying back to the South Australian border or down against that of New South Wales; and, I say further, that by the reservation—the honorable Minister for Lands does not like the word abstraction—by the reservation of the 30 millions of acres from their legitimate and proper function of supplying the wants of conditional selectors, we literally take the vital organ from the body of the colony, and leave it a lifeless frame, so far as conditional selection is concerned. The Colonial Treasurer said that even if these railways are not carried out, things remain as they are. But that is exactly what we do not want; we do not want things to remain as they are. There is no necessity for this land to be kept lying idle because the railways are not made. The land in the Burnett district is wanted now for conditional selection, and with these lands reserved from selection, and the land in the Moreton and Wide Bay and Burnett districts, already used up, where are the selectors to go? On the first day of the debate on this measure, I met a gentleman who wished to know where he could go and look for a bit of land. He was a representative man from Victoria, not a representative of Victorian capital and colonists who are able to buy up land at ten shillings per acre for grazing or speculation; neither was he that kind of man who would be content with 640 acres in a homestead area and be willing to perform the conditions of personal residence. He was a representative of those men who have prospered in Victoria, and filled up the place allotted to them in that colony, and who are looking for room to extend their operations, and are attracted here by the liberality of our land laws—just the kind of a man we have been endeavoring to induce to come and settle here for many years past, a representative of those experienced colonists who know what to do and how to do it. I had seen this gentleman before and had advised

him what to do. He did as I advised him, and made his investigations and found out that the Darling Downs were made a homestead area, that the Burnett and Carnarvon resumptions are included in the railway reserve, and that the Moreton and Wide Bay districts are totally used up as far as conditional selection is concerned, having been well picked over by men knowing the district for 8 years, and he at last comes to the conclusion, very naturally, but not perhaps justly, that our land laws are a mockery, delusion, and snare. What reply can be made to accusations of this kind? I confess I was puzzled by it, although I had some little experience in warding off attacks of that description. I have for several years been referred to respecting opportunities of selecting lands from my position as surveyor, and afterwards as a member of this House, and I confess I was baffled for a moment. While I did not admit the justice of the conclusion, I could not but think that after his experience in this colony the gentleman had good reason to come to the conclusion that the land laws of Queensland are what he had described them to be. I am perfectly well aware that homestead selections can be obtained; I know that what is now to be called conditional selection up to 640 acres, may be availed of in these reserves; I know that sales by auction may be held, and that purchasers may buy to the extent of their ability; but if these thirty million acres of land are to be handed over to men with the biggest purses, where is our boasted liberality in the matter of land legislation? How can honorable members who grumble and decry the sale of lands at thirty shillings an acre excuse themselves by voting for these thirty millions at ten shillings an acre? It was intimated that when I spoke on this matter on a former occasion, that I had described it as sacrificing the land. I did nothing of the kind. The price I do not hesitate saying is sufficiently large, but it is the principle I object to—the principle upon which these thirty millions of acres of land are to be disposed of. There can be no doubt that the colony is a pretty extensive one. I shall not say more about its size, but I could not but refer to the happy way in which the Minister for Lands extended its area by about 40 per cent., and on the very same evening in replying to the remarks I made, he spoke of the reserve made by the Western Railway Act as being 20,000,000 acres in one district. Why, sir, the railway has been stated to be 167 miles in length, and the reserve extends 50 miles beyond, or 210 miles in a direct line. Well, sir, the twenty millions that the honorable member speaks of is a little exaggeration of 50 per cent., and if the honorable member will be a little more cautious, I am sure his remarks will be taken more notice of. I have already pointed out that it is very different setting apart thirteen million acres of land such as that between Dalby and Roma, to setting

apart the picked lands of the colony, so that if the honorable member can find any resemblance, it is more than I can. If that thirteen millions is too much in the Western Railway Reserve, why does he intend to add thirty millions more before we have had any experience of that in the Western Railway Reserve? Whatever he may say does not detract from the fact that thirty millions are reserved, and whether he sells five, fifteen, or twenty millions, the principle still remains the same, that thirty millions are reserved from selection—thirty millions of the picked lands of the colony. I am of opinion, sir, that it is quite possible to overrate our resources as regards good land. I am satisfied that there is a great deal of good land in the back country, but it might as well be in the moon so far as small selectors are concerned. What we want is good land, easily accessible, and the only lands I know of that description are the lands which it is proposed to reserve in the Burnett and Carnarvon districts; the other is far removed from the coast district, and could only be available to the miners in the neighborhood of Peak Downs and Clermont. It has become fashionable to talk poetically of our own beautiful and almost boundless downs, our rich and fertile slopes, marine and black soil plains, and splendid tracts of table land; and to picture to ourselves and those around the beautiful landscape, the smiling fields, the lovely villages, and the waving pastures with their flocks and herds—all these, and other phrases useful in romantic hand-books may be glibly used; but when we have made all these reserves, and have induced people to come out, we shall find that after, perhaps, weeks and months of travel, they will return spiritless, disheartened, and disappointed men. As has been pointed out by the honorable member for the Leichhardt, there may be a lot of men brought out here under false pretences, men who may be driven to storm Government House, as was threatened some years ago, if they do not get employment on the public works, or do not get the land which they have been led to expect they will be able to get. I say, sir, if this is to be the result of the Railway Reserves Bill, and the land is to be handed over to the man with the longest purse, it is subversive of the land policy of which the Government and the country have approved; and all to make bogus railways which are some years before their time. The honorable Minister for Lands, a few evenings ago, referred us to the successful construction and management of the Southern and Western Railway. That line was commenced when we had a population of 40,000 or so, and has been carried to a successful completion, but its construction occupied nine years, according to the honorable member's own showing, and by that time the population and trade of the colony had quadrupled. The line, it must be borne in mind, was constructed in a district which

including the missing link from Brisbane to Ipswich, contained nearly the whole population of the colony, and communicated with the district in which most of the produce of the colony was raised; but after nine years' construction, after three or four more to cultivate a trade, after having 188 miles opened for traffic, we find that it has never yet paid two per cent. on its cost. That is the state of things, although that line was started under the most favorable circumstances, not dependent on the sale of land, not commencing with revenue already overrun to pay interest on an already existing debt, not split into fragments like the present scheme, but one continuous line without any predisposing causes of failure, and with everything favorable to success. Then there is the Great Northern line, with the important town of Rockhampton at one end and an enormous extent of country at the other; that has now for the first time only paid its working expenses, although it was far better able to get trade than any of the lines now proposed will be. Now, sir, if a railway running through a district with a population of 100,000 persons, or two-thirds of the population of the whole colony, does not pay more than two per cent. on its cost of construction, I would ask, how a railway from Bundaberg to the South Moonta, where there is only population in the district of 22,000, can be expected to pay the interest on the construction? How, even, is the Gympie line to do so? Evidence proves that the traffic on the last-named line will not pay for the lubrication of the axles of the trucks, and yet the Government have agreed to these bogus lines in order to please the members representing those districts, or rather, the people in those districts. We must know that all these are political handspikes to assist in rolling the logs which will land the colony in something like the state which I have already referred to. I, sir, should like the Government to abandon this scheme for the present; it is premature, and several years before its time. I have pointed out several reasons why the railways should not be made now, even although they might be justifiable at some other time. The honorable member for Toowoomba has pointed out that the honorable Treasurer was not, from his manner, quite sincere, and

"A man, convinced against his will,  
Is of the same opinion still."

We know, in fact, that the honorable Minister for Lands is the only member of the Government who really believes in this gigantic scheme of railways. I object to this scheme, not only because the Government are united upon it, but—and although I am sorry to say it, the truth must be told on this occasion—it is important that the colony should not be launched into this great expense by a Government composed as the present Government is of members representing only the towns interest. The Premier is a townsman;

he may be connected with pastoral pursuits, but he is not, so far as I know, connected with either mining or agricultural pursuits or manufactures. Take the honorable Minister for lands who introduced this Bill; he is a townsman in his individual and representative capacities, and is not connected with either mining, manufactures, or agriculture. Take the honorable Colonial Secretary; he too is associated with a town constituency; he is engaged in mercantile pursuits, and is not connected with any producing interest in the colony. Take the honorable Treasurer; he is a townsman to all intents and purposes, and not connected with mining, agriculture, or manufactures. Take the honorable Attorney-General, who represents a small agricultural constituency a few miles from the capital; is a professional man, and is a townsman unconnected with mining or manufactures. Take the honorable member in another place; he is a townsman, and, like the other members of the Ministry, totally unconnected with any producing interest in the colony. Now, I dislike to let any measure hinge on the construction of the present Ministry, but I think if all the arguments of the honorable member for Maranoa, all the facts adduced on the present and on former occasions, have failed to convince Ministers of their insincerity, or if the fact of only one Minister believing in the proposed system of railways is not sufficient—that the construction of the Ministry, and the fact that the colony is not in a fit state to be committed to such an enormous expenditure, should be sufficient to deter honorable members from passing the Bill.

Mr. J. Scott: Sir, so much has been said by the honorable member who introduced this Bill, and by honorable members supporting it, and so much has been said by those opposed to it, that I feel there is very little left for me to say. But I cannot allow this measure to go to a second reading without protesting at the manner in which it is proposed to make these railways. I have never objected to railways where there is any probability of their being reproductive works, but I do not see any reason why the interests of the community should be interfered with in order to carry out some fanciful idea of the present Government. So far as I can make out, the only reason for these railway reserves is this, that it is a fair thing that the land through which a railway passes, and which is benefited by it, should be made to pay for the cost of construction. There is something in that, and if the Government brought down a scheme by which the minimum of evil would be counterbalanced by a maximum of good, I should not object to it; but in this case the minimum of good will be counterbalanced by the maximum of evil. As far as I understand the proposition of the Government, it is to resume very large areas of land, far in excess of what is required, and to dispossess the pre-

sent lessees, and place it in the hands of other persons. If that land is sold as proposed, it means ruin to a great many, and therefore I cannot but think it is unfair to individuals. Another matter for consideration is this, that the financial disturbances will be very painful. The honorable Minister for Lands has told us that the lands in the Western Railway Reserve will be more than sufficient to pay for the construction of that line; but why should so many persons be dispossessed, or perhaps ruined, when, if instead of resuming fifty miles on each side of the line, the Government had adopted the present law, which is, that wherever a railway is projected, three miles on each side should be resumed, the sale of that land would have sufficed to have paid the interest on the construction of the line and the working expenses until such time as the line began to pay. The honorable Colonial Secretary has told us that railways are made to increase traffic and open up the country, and I take it that we are not asked to construct railways that would not do that; we have also been told that these lines will pay, but, in spite of what the honorable member may say on that point, we have the example of the New South Wales and Victorian lines before us, which show a loss on the cost of construction. It is not, however, a question whether a railway should pay, for there are other considerations which will more than counterbalance it. In regard to the financial part of the matter, I will just point out by the figures which have been given by the honorable Minister for Lands that the distance of the railway from Dalby to Roma is 160 miles; from Warwick to the Border is 68 miles; from Maryborough to Gympie, 65 miles; from Bundaberg to South Moonta, 48 miles; from Lurline to Emerald Downs, 33 miles; and from Townsville to Charters Towers, 88 miles; making a total of 462 miles of railway which the Government propose to make; and taking the honorable gentleman's own figures, and putting down the cost at £6,000 per mile, we shall have a total of £1,760,000. Honorable members will bear in mind that that represents a sum of £276,000 to be got from this land every year for ten years; and they will see the difficulty at once when I mention that if the lines are completed in five years, over half-a-million will have to be provided yearly over and above all the ordinary land sales going on in the colony. Now, I will point out to honorable members the amounts which have been received from sales of land during the last few years, and they will be able to see what may be expected in future. In 1870, sales by auction and selection realised £36,042; in 1871, from auction and selection, £29,939; in 1872, from auction and selection and mineral lands, £55,695; in 1873, from auction and selection, £18,343, mineral lands, in which there was a small depreciation, £18,100, and from pre-emptions under the Act of

1869, £6,280, or a total for that year of £42,723; in 1874, from auction and selection, £21,952, mineral lands, £4,254, and pre-emptions, £4,096, or a total of £30,302 for that year; in 1874-5, from auction and selection, £12,475, mineral lands, £1,987, and pre-emptions, £33,920, or a total of £51,382. With the exception of the year when so much mineral land was taken up, until last year, the sum realised from the lands never amounted to £50,000, and for the last five or six years the average has been £40,000. Well, sir, I should like to know where this extra amount of money which will be necessary is to come from. If, as has been shown, the purchasing power of the colony is something like £40,000 annually, where is the £276,000 for the next ten years from auction sales alone to come from? With regard to the Northern line, I was very glad to hear that it is intended to carry the extension to Emerald Downs, for this reason, that Lurline is not suited to teams, as there is little or no grass there; whilst if extended to Emerald Downs, there will be good camping ground, and it will be an excellent terminus until such time as the line is extended. I beg to move—

That this debate be now adjourned.

MR. BAILEY said: The honorable member who last addressed the House seems to have no objection to railway extension, so long as that railway extension only and exactly suits the interest to which he belongs. He has no reasonable objection to urge against the extension to Emerald Downs, but it seems he has a serious objection to railway extension in any other part of the colony. So far our system of railways has been in the interest of one or two industries alone—the Southern and Western line for agriculturists and squatters, and the Northern line for the benefit of the same two classes, or perhaps purely for the squatters. But the Government have now consulted the interest of another class, a class which has asserted its claims to consideration from this House, and that is the mining community. I was not at all surprised at the speech of the honorable member for East Moreton this evening; it was just the speech we might have expected from a gentleman who became a Minister from no other qualification than his knowledge as a surveyor. Now, I ask, can that honorable member know anything about the value of the lands on the Burnett district, or what can he know about the lands in other districts? He never saw them, and knows no more about them than any tradesman in Queen street; and for that honorable member to stand up in this House and say how they should be disposed of, and how they should not be disposed of, seems to a resident in those districts, who is acquainted with the lands in them, to say the least, very absurd. He too, who during his tenure of office, tied the cords of red tape so tight as to strangle the selector! He who, whilst Minister for

Lands, did more to retard settlement than any other Minister who preceded him! he now finds out that all the policy of the Government is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. And why, sir, does the honorable member say that? Why, because he no longer sits on the Treasury benches where he would like well to sit. The honorable member is always so handy with his figures that I must say I am rather inclined to mistrust them—they come out too glibly from the honorable gentleman. I recollect hearing of a lecturer who, on one occasion, had forgotten his umbrella, and had to go and fetch it before he could deliver his lecture; and so with the honorable member for East Moreton this evening, when he having forgotten his notes, could not state the length of the Dalby and Roma line correctly; he stated it was 160 miles, but I believe he will find 190 miles nearer the mark. He also referred to the large population on the southern and western districts as an argument in favor of their having a railway, and said that, because there are only 22,000 in the Wide Bay and Burnett district, they have no right to ask for anything of the kind; but I would ask whether, if there was not a railway, there would now be anything like 100,000 people in the Southern and Western districts? The honorable member also spoke of having met one gentleman at the door of this Assembly, who had come from Victoria to take up some land, but had been unable to get any. Why, sir, when copper was discovered in the Mount Perry district, men did not come by ones, but by thousands, and why did they not stop? Why, because they received no encouragement from the Government; they saw that they would not have the means of carrying away the ore when they got it, to market. But those men will come again when they find that a railway is to be made, and the same large numbers will be collected together at Mount Perry, as was the case a few years ago. I am very glad indeed that the Government have at last consented to do tardy justice to these several districts, and the rising interests of the colony. The real capital of the colony lies in the soil, and beneath the soil. It is from our mines and from our land we may expect to derive constant and increasing revenue—in fact, the real prosperity of the colony.

MR. McILWRAITH said: I think the Government ought to be satisfied now that they were wrong in insisting on continuing the debate the other evening in the way that they did. We have had the opportunity, as we had the right, to speak on this question, and we have got a statement from the honorable the Treasurer—a statement which I am perfectly satisfied he would not have given at all, if they could possibly have come to a division the other night. We have also had speeches which show that members are beginning to realise the real principles that are at the foundation of this Bill. I can say for myself,

I have heard those principles recognised and discussed more intelligibly to-night than I have on previous occasions, especially on the Government benches, and I think it would have been a disgrace to this colony, that a measure, which is said by the Press critics who have criticised it to contain financial principles which involve such heavy interests should have been passed over without a word from the honorable the Treasurer. But there was a stronger reason why a Bill of this sort should receive mature consideration, and that the opinions arrived at after that mature consideration, should be expressed by the honorable the Treasurer, when we consider the actual financial position of the colony as put before us in the quarterly financial statement that has just been issued in the *Government Gazette*. That statement, sir, I have no hesitation in saying has been deliberately put before the people of this colony for the purpose of deluding them. I see that statement includes what has never been to my knowledge in any quarterly statement issued up to the present time. That is a balance-sheet showing the credit and debit balance at the Treasury, a thing which has never been done before to my knowledge, except in one way, and that is in the financial tables that accompany the Treasurer's statement in this House. I will refer honorable members to the quarterly statement of revenue, and if they look at page 637, they will find there a balance-sheet showing that on the 1st of July there was a debtor balance of £43,823, and on the 30th of September, that is, last month, there was a credit balance of £119,660. Now, sir, we know perfectly well—we have analysed the statement—at least I have—and I say, so far from that statement being a true representation of the facts, it is not a true representation of the facts at all; and so far from giving any one any idea of the financial position of the colony, it is calculated most undoubtedly to mislead honorable members.

Mr. PALMER: That is what it is meant for.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I should like to have a considerable amount of time to analyse that statement, which I have not at present. The result of my examination, however, is this: That the whole of the revenue returns show that the calculations made by the present Treasurer when making his budget speech have been completely falsified—that he has not got the revenue he calculated upon—and the expenditure items show that there has been a deliberate attempt on the part of the Treasury Department to keep down the expenditure of the three months by charging it to succeeding three months, and thus showing a credit balance in the Treasury. That I could prove if I had time deliberately to go over the items. In the next place, the very fact of such a balance-sheet being shown at this time, is perfectly against the custom, because I never remember it being done before in a quarterly statement.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes; last year.

Mr. McILWRAITH: Well, it is an exception which proves the rule, and I shall refer to that directly. This balance-sheet, which has not been published before, except on the one occasion the honorable gentleman has just referred to, will enable us to see why it was published. What are we to conclude from it? Simply, that the Treasurer wanted to induce a favorable opinion as to finances of the colony, an opinion which, if the figures be actually analysed, a perfectly different result would appear. He has made the balance at a time when the revenue would appear more than he estimated, and the expenditure less than the expenditure that ought to have been made, because he attempts to show a credit balance on the day the whole of the pastoral rents were paid into the Treasury; and the statement is misleading in a great measure with regard to the expenditure. The honorable member has had an opportunity of referring to this, and explaining how he brings this balance before the House; and he has not done so, but he has referred me to a case in which this statement was published before.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Five times it has been done.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I can only say that during all the time I have been a member of the House it has not been done before but once, and that was a very exceptional case. There were rumors circulated and referred to in the Press, that when the late Treasurer, Mr. Hemmant, made his Financial Statement, he would come down with a bad balance, and to allay popular excitement, he published in the *Gazette* a balance-sheet in the same way as this had been published, keeping back certain expenditure, and showing a credit balance of £7,840; and when the present Treasurer came forward and made his budget speech this year, he told us that if the position of the Treasury had been properly stated then, instead of there being a credit balance shown, there would have been a debit balance of £80,000. I have brought this in to show that the honorable the Treasurer has utterly failed to connect this Bill with the present financial position of the colony; and more than that, he has utterly failed to connect this Bill with the financial position of the colony at any time. Before proceeding to answer the speech of the honorable member, seeing the honorable the Minister for Lands in his place, I must refer to what occurred in the House the other night. Very much to my astonishment, when I came into the House, the honorable the Minister for Lands was in a towering passion, and inveighed against me for having accused him of insincerity in bringing forward this Bill at all. Now, I remember perfectly well the statement I made of this affair. I said the honorable member, last year, when the Western Railway Bill was before the House, had not been a supporter of that Bill, and that he came forward and

asked us now to adopt that principle as one that had been approved last year, but I never said he was insincere; I never dreamt of anything of the sort. I might have accused him of being inconsistent or inconstant, but he is the last man in the House I would call insincere. If, instead of contradicting what he said last year this year he contradicted himself in the same speech before he sat down, which I am satisfied he often does, I would not call him insincere, but I might say he was inconstant or inconsistent. I stand upon what I said, that he was not a supporter of the Bill, that he did not believe in its principles, and expressed so in this House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, no.

Mr. McILWRAITH: I say, "Yes, yes." The honorable the Attorney-General, in answering my charge, took a course which, I think, would justify the honorable the Minister for Lands in anything. If the honorable gentleman only talks long enough in the same speech, I guarantee you will find an expression of any opinion you like. I will just prove this opinion. When the Western Railway Bill was before the House on its second reading, the honorable the Minister for Lands gave his adhesion to it, but in words that showed clearly that he misapprehended the real principles of the Bill. He said:—

"He believed it also involved the recognition of a most important principle, namely, that of making the land pay for the cost of the railway. He took that to be the most important principle involved in the Bill, and to that extent he could give it his cordial support, though he must confess that in some matters of detail in connection with the Bill, he held opinions somewhat different from the Government."

That is what the honorable the Attorney-General in defending the Minister for Lands the other night referred to, and said I was perfectly in error in stating the honorable gentleman opposed the Bill, and that he had done nothing of the sort. An important amendment came on which very much changed the character of the Bill. I will not refer to what the amendment was, but the honorable the Minister for Lands, in speaking to the amendment, very much praised the Opposition, and especially myself and Mr. Graham, who was then member for Clermont. Mr. Buzacott then got in a passion, and said:—

"The honorable member for Maryborough, who did understand the amendments, expressed his sorrow that the Ministry whom he supported had introduced so incomplete a scheme as their Bill, and acknowledged that the amendments provided a more comprehensive and just scheme, and one that the country could understand. The House must be surprised that that honorable member after making a long speech against the Ministerial measure, wound up by saying that he would support it."

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Mr. Douglas took occasion to reply, and we then find him further turned round in his opinion. He said:—

"Though he disapproved of the Bill, he did not approve of the amendments, though there were features in them that he considered were deserving of consideration. He never said he was decidedly opposed to the Government measure. He had crotchets which were not entertained by anybody else in the House but the honorable member for Maranoa."

This, sir, was the time when the honorable the Minister for Lands was getting round from your opinion to mine, which he decidedly did before the end of the session. I hope honorable members understand the change so far as we have gone. Now, the next phase of it is this:—When the Bill got to its ultimate stage, when the plans for the construction of a railway were before the House for approval, the honorable gentleman said:—

"He felt bound to say a few words in connection with this motion. Like the honorable member for Dalby, and also like the honorable member for Maranoa"—

Like me, mind you—

"he had objected, in the first instance, to the railway policy of the Government"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The general policy of the Government; that is, not the Western Railway Bill.

Mr. McILWRAITH:

"and he had expressed an opinion similar to that so strongly advocated by the honorable member for Maranoa."

I knew he was gradually coming round to that opinion, and at this last stage I got indignant at this, because he had been shuffling; because he spoke in favor of the amendment, and always voted against it, and I consistently told him—

"He was astonished to hear the expressions of approval made by that honorable member, in reference to the action he (Mr. McIlwraith) had taken with regard to this line on the second reading of the Bill. He was astonished now to hear the honorable gentleman express his approval of the course he (Mr. McIlwraith) had taken, and he regretted that the honorable member did not give them his time and talents in trying to make the Bill such as he should like to see it, and he believed, if he had, the measure would be perfectly different from what it was now."

There was a complete revolution; he started north and got round completely south. He started as a supporter of the scheme, and at the end, so strongly was he against it, that he went a great deal further, and on the final motion, look at the division! "Ayes 19, Noes 2, Mr. Douglas and Mr. Bell." Why, sir, the conjunction of the names suggests how the matter stood. Mr. Bell, who was lukewarm on the Opposition side, said he would cut off his right hand rather than see the Bill pass, and what must the Minister for Lands have



suffered before he would see it passed? The honorable gentleman made a long speech—a second speech on this question—but I have little to answer except one thing, the honorable the Colonial Treasurer having relieved me of the responsibility of trying to convince the House that the honorable the Minister for Lands is wrong. The honorable the Minister for Lands told us as distinctly as possible that the Western Railway Act might have been a tentative measure once, but it was now reduced to actual practice and proof, and the honorable the Treasurer said it was a tentative measure, and brought forward arguments to prove it was so. The honorable the Minister for Lands has been so completely answered by the Treasurer, that I have nothing to add. There is another statement I wish to answer. The honorable member for Carnarvon is not in his place, but I know he will give me credit for not misrepresenting him, when I say he completely misunderstood my argument. The honorable the Minister for Lands, in bringing before the House reasons why the railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe should be constructed—he only gave one reason, and that was, that it would be a good line of railway because it would bring down produce from New England which could not be grown here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The tin mines.

Mr. McILWRAITH: In reply, I opposed that; I said, what were we to think of a railway when the only argument brought forward by the member who proposed it was that it should be constructed to benefit the farmers in another colony to the destruction of our own farmers? That was my argument, and I can appeal to honorable members in support of my statement; and when the honorable member for Carnarvon got up, he said he regretted to find that the honorable member for Maranoa said the only reason that could be urged in favor of a line from Warwick to Stanthorpe—the only good reason that could be brought forward—was, that produce could be brought down from New England. But I said nothing of the sort. I was replying to the arguments of the honorable the Minister for Lands, and said if that was the only reason he could bring forward in favor of that railway—it was not in favor of it, but against it—I could bring forward a dozen reasons in favor of the construction of that line. I should not have mentioned this had it not been that the honorable the Treasurer said my arguments, with regard to that railway, had been ably answered by the honorable member for Carnarvon. I now come to the honorable the Treasurer, who divided his sermon under three heads. He says there are three ways of constructing railways: first by borrowing; second, by making the land pay for the construction; and third, by establishing a sinking fund; and after he had stated these three methods of railway con-

struction, he dealt with each separately. With regard to borrowing we had his speech at the commencement of the session over again—that we must not do such a thing. He deprecated borrowing, and the reasons he brought forward are just the reasons I should expect a man to bring forward who desired to pursue a policy of rest-and-be-easy. That was the character of the argument he brought to bear, and I am not going to be at the trouble of showing my faith in railway extension in this colony by answering his argument at length, but I will give an example of his line of argument. He said we should not borrow a large amount of money, because in Victoria they had to pay £240,000 annually for interest on the cost of the railways constructed. That is, that the interest on the money raised to construct the railways actually exceeds the net amount received from the railways by £240,000 per annum. Now, he must have got his information in a very shallow way. It is easy enough to get figures of that kind, but if he wished to make an argument out of them, he ought to have stated fully the information which he might have got from the report of the Commissioner for Railways of that colony. I have read that report, and so far from being a discouraging report which should make us seriously consider whether we should go on with railway construction in this colony, it is entirely of an opposite character, because it explains that the annual deficit of £240,000 arose in this way: that while the construction of railways was going on, an immense amount of capital actually sunk was not realising anything at all; the railways were incomplete, and the money borrowed for the purpose of their construction was lying unproductive; but when they were finished and in working order, the effect would be very different. The commissioner goes on to show, that taking the last lines constructed, they will pay more than one per cent. over the amount of interest; taking the line towards New South Wales, for instance, he shows that last year and the year before, it paid 5½ per cent., which is anything but a disheartening argument; and the honorable member has misconstrued that report, if he ever read it, for otherwise he would have done the railways of Victoria some justice. He concluded his argument against borrowing by an argument against the construction of railways at all in the colony, because the colony is not able to pay for them. The second method, of paying for the construction of railways in land, I think should have some consideration. The honorable gentleman took the trouble to divide his subject into three heads, but he said nothing at all about the second; and with regard to the third principle, of establishing a sinking fund, if he is under the impression that that is the principle of this Bill, he was never more mistaken in his life. That is the perfectly sound common-sense system adopted in Victoria, and it might, with advantage, have been adopted here; but

there is no provision in this Bill for a sinking fund. The preamble says:—

“Whereas it is expedient that provision should be made for the future construction of railways in the colony and that funds for the construction of the same should be provided by the sale of Crown lands.”

That is the principle of the Bill, and it is only modified in the 13th and 14th clauses, where it provides, as I understand, for cases of emergency. If you attempt to start a railway before getting the money by the sale of land, then the Government may advance a certain amount of money; but he ignores that principle, and tries to get out of it by showing that these reserves are simply set apart to provide a sinking fund; that is, that the land is sold, and the money goes into a fund to repay the debt incurred, the country in the meantime paying the interest on that debt. That is a point he has utterly ignored in his position as Treasurer. We find the first advance is to be £600,000, which, at four per cent., involves an expenditure of £24,000, and that must go on until those reserves realise something, but he never said a word about how the money was to be procured for building the railways, nor made provision for the payment of interest. The honorable the Minister for Lands has told us the land will not be sold for a long time, and I say the Treasurer has not performed his duty in showing how he is going to realise the interest on this £600,000, and further amounts that may be advanced from the Treasury. He has failed completely in doing that—in fact, he never referred to it at all. The honorable the Minister for Lands—and he is the only member who has gone into the question on the other side—has told us in effect what the Bill means. It means, pass this Bill and we'll make the Gympie Railway. I will be no party to this bad principle simply to pass a line, which, if you had come down in a common-sense way, asking directly for the money for the construction of that railway, would not receive the sanction of one-third of the House. It has always been the custom in this House, when a member refuses to take the interpretation put on his argument in a speech, to quote that speech, and the principle applies with much greater cogency when the honorable member quotes an argument that has been published in the newspapers after deliberate thought. The Treasurer brings forward any argument said to have been used by me, and states it himself. I interrupted him, because if he had quoted my words, he would have had nothing to answer; he then got in a passion, backed up by the honorable the Attorney-General, and said it was an argument I had used; he said it was stated in the public prints that if this Railway Reserves Bill were carried out, the Treasury would be mulcted—or rather, there would be a deficiency in the Treasury of something like £226,000, the annual amount at present received from the sale of Crown lands. That

is what the honorable the Treasurer said I had said. Now, sir, what I did say I will read, and honorable members will be able to judge which was right. I said:—

“The Treasurer estimates the amount to be derived this year from land sales at £226,000. He has arranged for the expenditure of every farthing of that in the ordinary disbursements of the Government, which in other countries are made from the proceeds of taxation. A deficit having been established last year, and a larger deficit evidently feared next, the Treasurer further proposes, and has received the assent of the House, to supplement the revenue by a loan of £100,000, all of which is to be devoted to works which hitherto, with one exception, have been done from the ordinary revenue. Parliament, in effect, have said that this year it takes all the proceeds of taxation and land sales, and £100,000 besides, to carry on the current expenditure of Government; and that they will have no additional taxation; and in the face of these facts, sir, can you expect us not to look doubtful when you ask us to be joyful because in some hidden way the great principle of considering the proceeds of land sales as capital instead of revenue has been recognised at last? Suppose that, instead of the principle remaining a dead letter in this Bill, as I think it will, it is forced into life, and next year the proceeds of the land sales having been put into reproductive works hitherto made from loan, the revenue will be deficient £226,000, and if the Treasurer uses the same resources as he did this year, he will borrow in the English market to make good the deficiency. I need not point out the difference to you of a country borrowing for national reproductive works, and borrowing to make good a deficit. The price of our debentures would soon indicate that.”

Is there no great difference between that argument and the one put into my mouth by the Treasurer? I wish, sir, instead of answering the garbled translation of my opinion he gave, he would take that in his hand and reply to it. I remember that last year, you, sir, gave us an argument in connection with the Western Railway Bill, and it was the best argument you brought forward, although a very bad one, which was reproduced in a very bad way this year by the present Treasurer. He put it in this way:—If, he says, these five million acres were sold at 10s. an acre, and the proceeds were applied to the purpose of making railways, we would have the whole of the seven railways constructed, amounting to some two and a-half millions of money, and the Treasury would not suffer, as I have always said. Can there be anything more ridiculous and childish than an argument of this kind? What he means is this: if you can exchange five millions of acres for a railway, it will be an advantage to the colony. Well, sir, I say so too. If five million acres can be got rid of in that way without any change that is detrimental to the colony, it will be an undoubted benefit. But that involves the whole question, and the honorable gentleman perfectly ignored it. What he said was simply an arithmetical calculation; any

man can tell you that 5,000,000 acres of land at ten shillings per acre will produce £2,500,000. We can easily calculate the saving to the colony if this prospect can be realised; but the question we expected the Colonial Treasurer to answer, and the question which he shirked, was, how he was going to raise the money to construct these works? There is not a member on that side of the House who has not shown that he cannot realise it from the proceeds of the land. He himself says he cannot get it by borrowing, and are we then to come to the conclusion that what he said to his constituents was, after all, true, and that they do not mean to make the railways at all? The tone of the honorable gentleman's speech certainly leaves us no other conclusion to draw. The honorable Colonial Secretary, I observe, is not in his place, and he ought to be. If we are kept here till eleven o'clock at night to speak upon an important matter like this, and if we, the Opposition, have consented to sit late with the view of closing the debate to-night, the least the Government can do is that each member personally should give us his attention during the whole of the debate. I have noticed that the Ministers have only come in in relays, and especially so when they were likely to hear a little common sense. I will not finish until the honorable gentleman is in his place, if the debate does not conclude for a week. The honorable the Colonial Treasurer evinced the same anxiety as the Minister for Lands to prove his sincerity, complaining very much that he was accused of insincerity for being a party to bringing forward the Charters Towers and Townsville Railway, and his proof of sincerity is, that the Government, of which he was a supporter, brought in a proposal last year for a survey, and passed it. He says that the Government, having once pledged itself to vote a certain amount of money for the railway, is bound to complete the railway in the next year, and if not, there is clear proof of insincerity. I suppose the honorable the Colonial Treasurer did not go very deep into finance, his arguments being of a somewhat general character, because he thought the subject had been exhausted by the Colonial Secretary on a previous night. That honorable member propounded some of the most extraordinary doctrines in finance. He told us that money was like water, in that it always found its own level. I tried to follow his idea while he was speaking, but completely failed, and I have looked at his speech since, and am still at fault. He told me that if I put my hand in my pocket and pulled out ten guineas and created a vacuum in that way, there would be a sort of pressure from everywhere to fill up that vacuum. I am sorry to say, sir, I do not ever find this theory in actual practice. Still, that is the honorable gentleman's argument, and although it seems to be an extraordinary one, it is exactly, no doubt, what he meant. In reply to my argument that it would be damag-

ing to the colony to take its capital and apply it to the purchase of land, we must remember, he says, that this is a different country from the home country, and that here most of the banks are supported by capital from home; that, in fact, if you take the capital from these banks for the purpose of purchasing land, money flows from other sources like water to fill up the vacuum; in other words, that funds will at once come in to supply the money so taken up. Such an argument as that shows plainly that the honorable gentleman has not the slightest notion how banking is carried on in this colony. If he had listened to the figures quoted by the honorable member for Toowoomba to-night, and from which he drew a very conclusive argument, he would have seen that the Colonial Secretary's argument had no foundation in fact. The honorable gentleman told us that between notes in circulation and deposits, there was a little over 3 millions in the banks. The real figures are, notes in circulation, £336,497; deposits, £2,896,508; total, £3,233,065; this being the indebtedness of the banks to the colony, while the discount and advances, amounting to £3,147,437, represents the indebtedness of the colony to the banks, leaving a balance of £85,628, as the amount owed by the colony to the banks, and as the National Bank of Queensland does not employ capital outside of the colony, the balance must be their capital. So far, therefore, from this country being supplied from the outside with capital, it is quite the other way. We find, therefore, that the theory of water, like money, finding its own level, is quite groundless. Money has been going out of the colony in spite of ourselves to carry on the business of other colonies; it is, sir, in a word, a false argument altogether, and is not founded on the simplest knowledge of banking. The honorable gentleman must know that bankers do not lend their own money, but money they have borrowed from others, and he will find, twist it as he likes, that the money for the purchase of land in the colony comes from the people of this colony, and not from the banks, and it will be a long time before the banks supply money for any such purpose. The honorable gentleman referred to the fact that we had at some time or other advocated the borrowing of money for the purpose of making railways and selling lands sufficient to pay the interest. How does he meet that? He asks, if the lands are sold and applied to the payment of the interest, what becomes of the principal, which must come due some day? Is there not an amount of absurdity about an argument of this kind? Can they bring any objection whatever against the ability of the colony to sell lands to pay the interest, while the Bill, if it asserts anything at all, asserts the ability of the colony to pay, not only the interest, but the whole of the principal required for the construction of the railways? There is a half sentimental idea connected with financial separation in this Bill, and I

am astonished to find that it has been worked up as it has by those who have considered, or affected to consider, that this Bill is a step towards financial separation. The meaning of the Bill is, that certain districts marked off on the map are, in the future, to provide for the construction of railways there. Is it not well known that the Government will be made responsible, and are responsible for making railways in all parts of this colony? Take the Darling Downs. That district has just been devoted to one object, namely, the making of homestead areas. There is not an acre there to construct a line from. Do they mean to make it a bar to making lines there, that the principle of financial separation having been adopted, they must make the lines out of the proceeds of the land? Is this to be the answer given to the people on the Darling Downs, the Logan, and East Moreton—that the land being sold, they have no claim for railways? We know this is not the case. We know that in spite of this Railway Reserves Bill being drawn, the country where the land is sold has as much claim, and perhaps more, because of the settlement that has taken place there, as any other portion of the colony, and there is not the slightest doubt those claims will have to be recognised. The evil is intensified rather than abated by what has taken place, and this agitation about separation will not be confined now to the North, for it will extend wherever the reserves are made. The people in those reserves will, and not unnaturally, say, “We have paid for our railways; why are we to be taxed to make railways anywhere else?” The Government cannot get out of this dilemma, try as they will; and they must acknowledge that, the principle being established, it is not the intention of the Government to make railways except from funds raised in the locality. If they do that, the Bill will be thrown out at once; if they, on the other hand, say that future Governments will be responsible for making railways there as well as anywhere else, the principle of financial separation is gone. In fact, sir, it never was in the Bill, and to call what is there the principle of financial separation is too absurd. You see the absurdities of it when you apply it to a particular district. If you work it out in practice, and stand by the principle, you will find that the populous parts of the colony will be the parts that, in the future, will have no claim to railway extension. I do not mean, Mr. Speaker, to enter further into this part of the question, and repeat arguments that have been already used against the Bill. I have not changed my mind about it, though I can see that other men have changed theirs, and you may be certain that the more the Bill is known, the more it will be opposed; I have no doubt if ever it is attempted to bring it into action, it will bring its own cure with it, but it will be to the great detriment of the

colony. The evils will be seen the moment it is put into actual practice. The Government might have supported this principle if it is a good one, holding back, however, such a sweeping measure as this until the proof of the principle had been made by the sale of lands under the Western Railway Act. That has not been done. It might have been done by this time if the Government had seen that it was necessary to prove the principle before it was carried; but they were not wise enough, and now they will see the bad effects, I am sure of it, as soon as the first sale has taken place, and I have no doubt honorable members on that side of the House will be the first to deprecate the evils that will inevitably result. They will find that they have not got the class of men to purchase which they expected; there will be none of the capitalists from foreign countries that have been talked about; for, as they will find, the lands will be purchased by the people of the colony. Very little capital, I am convinced, will come from the outside; the proceeds will be entirely realised from capital employed in the colony. I must maintain, sir, that the arguments I used the other night have not been met. We have given every encouragement by a Liberal Land Bill such as has not been seen in any other colony, namely, the 1868 Land Bill, in which a man under the easiest conditions may take 10,000 acres of land, yet the result has been the addition of only £1,200,000 to the Treasury. How then can the Minister for Lands tell us that a Bill which provides for the sale of land in blocks of 2,500 acres will realise more than this? The minimum price I presume will be ten shillings an acre, with the other Bill, the minimum price was half the amount, with a system of deferred payments that virtually reduced the amount to three and eightpence per acre. There was land offered under all manner of temptations, and it was not taken in the manner that was expected; and yet the Minister for Lands comes forward and says people will rush and buy lands when the conditions are much harder. The Colonial Treasurer ought clearly to have shown how he expected to provide £25,000 for the interest of the railways he proposed just now. He certainly finds no encouragement in his own Treasury statements just published; it is but too plain that he cannot get it there, without increasing present taxation. He has this year relieved the revenue of £100,000, that is to say he has borrowed that sum for expenditure on public works which have hitherto been executed out of the general revenue of the colony. Next year then—I will not say swindle, but—manipulation of the finances will be far too plain to every honorable member to allow that sort of thing to be done again, and he will not get £100,000 next year to make temporary roads and so forth in the colony. He has this additional debt of £25,000 to provide for, and if he will but study his own figures, he will

find there is a deficit of £80,000 apparent. And that is the state of the colony when Ministers come down in this indefinite way and talk of a scheme, the effect of which not one of them, I am convinced, understands. The honorable member for Toowoomba has shown very plainly that the Customs, so far from realising the expected interest of £43,000 on the year, have been gradually decreasing. Taking the two sources of revenue—the Customs and Excise—the facts are that in the three months, instead of the increase calculated upon by the Treasurer, we have an increase of £25 only. And any business man will tell you at once that the revenue proceeds from the last three months are likely to be better in proportion than those of the succeeding nine months, and that if he does not get his increase in these three months there is little chance of realising it in the remainder of the year. Indeed, sir, I look upon this expectation as completely gone. His estimate in almost everything else has been falsified when he put down a large increase. The railway revenue, for example, has not come up to anything like what he predicted; and although the statement concludes with an addition showing an increase on the whole in the revenue of £24,447 for the quarter, there is little to congratulate ourselves on when we analyse the return. It might be accounted for in three ways: £12,627 of that amount is due entirely to rents of runs, which rents are paid only once in the year, on the 30th September, giving the Treasurer, therefore, the whole of the increase on that head for the twelve months; £5,727 is due to the sale of lands by auction, and I have often expressed the opinion that this will not be a permanent source of revenue if it is spent on the ephemeral work of meeting current liabilities. Then we have £2,531 from the Official Assignee, I suppose simply an account transferred. These three amounts then account for the whole of the increase, but in order to make good the calculations—that is to say provide funds for the expenditure—he must have an increase of £126,000, and we have gone three months into the year and have not got a single penny in the way of increase. But, sir, in order to make the Estimates look something like feasible, he actually makes out a balance in favor of the Treasury to the amount of £160,000. And how is that startling effect managed? In the first place, I must observe that the statement should never have been published at this time, because £130,000—the rents from pastoral runs accruing on one day—must give a balance on the right side, so that it is impossible to have a correct view of the financial position of the colony if the balance is struck at that time. I say, after a personal inspection of the *Government Gazette* from the 1st January, 1873, and from personal recollection of my own in the House in 1869 and 1870, with the exception I have mentioned to-night, when Mr. Hemmant was reduced to the necessity of showing

a balance in the same way as is done now, this course has never been adopted in the colony before. As to the way in which the expenditure has been put before the House, I can see nothing else in it but a deliberate attempt to try and put a smiling face upon the state of affairs. It is false, as will be shown by simply reading the items. We all know that the Estimates, so far as they have gone, have not tended in the direction of reducing the expenditure; they have rather been the opposite way. In all departments we see the same thing—an increase everywhere. Let us examine the Treasury statement just published. Take the police for instance. The police expenditure within the last three months, is represented to be £30,707, while in the corresponding quarter of last year it was £39,757, or less by £9,000. Does any honorable member of the House believe that such a statement as this can be got up except in one way—that of reserving payments that are actually due, and ought to have been debited to the quarter? I will take another example: charitable allowances in the corresponding period of last year, were £8,037, and this year for the same period of time they are £5,061. Honorable members are aware that there are much larger funds under this heading than in any previous year, yet the Treasury have not paid them. This, then, is the way in which the expenditure is made to appear so much lower than in the same quarter of 1875. Take the next item—grants in aid of public institutions; last year it was £1,293; this year it is £888. Again, I say, honorable members are aware that provision is made on the Estimates for a much larger amount, but the money is not paid. Perhaps, the Attorney-General, who has some knowledge of accounts, would be glad to hear a little about his own department. Last year, in the quarter ending 30th September, the Supreme Court cost £2,247; this year, in the same period, it is only £1,290. But there is no reduction made in the Estimates, and we must conclude that by some manipulation of the accounts, payment of amounts due has been kept back, and that they must be paid. So again, in the item of District Courts, the sum in 1875 was £3,484, and in 1876, £1,681—actually half the amount; and this, while the District Courts show the reverse of a saving, an actual increase having been voted. Still, as I have plainly shown, they have managed to manipulate the accounts in order to show a balance on the side of the worthy Treasurer. I could read through the items connected with every department with the same results; they have put down less expenditure than is due for the three months. It is quite possible the money is not paid, I am sure it must be so, or Mr. Drew would not have certified to such a document; but I say unfair means have been taken to keep payment back. The Treasurer has placed before us a balance quite unprecedented, and

he can only give one instance in which such a balance was ever seen before, and that was when it was given at a certain time to serve a special and similar purpose.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I should not have said anything more than I have said on this question, had not the honorable member made some remarks about me; and the tenor of his observations was that he himself was the only person in the House who understood finance. Now, sir, I believe it is possible some people may know something about banking without being a bank director. As to the example he gave of my arguments, namely, that if he took a handful of money out of his pocket, other money would flow in, as water finds its own level, that is an illustration to which I might very well apply the term he applied to some other remarks of mine—it is silly. More than that, it is silly in the extreme. What I did say was, that the banks in this colony, with one exception, were branches either of banks in the other colonies, or in the mother-country, and that if money was wanted in this colony it would find its level, that is to say, it would be drawn from the other colonies—from the head banks to the places where it is most required. The honorable member himself supplied me with the illustration. He said:—

“Why, sir, there is no colony in the whole Australian group that has better facilities for selling land, and better customers than New South Wales has; she has been bleeding Victoria from the very first for money for her lands, and she is not yet aware of the bad effects of putting so much into the market.”

I stated in some previous remarks that I had no doubt that when we offered these lands for sale, we should bleed, not only Victoria, but New South Wales through these banks. The honorable member referred to the bank returns, and said that if I knew anything about banking, I should know that they only lent the money deposited with them; but there is nothing in the Act to confine those banks to the money they receive as deposits.

Mr. WALSH: I rise to a point of order, sir.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order the honorable member refers to?

Mr. WALSH: The honorable member is not at all addressing himself to the question before the House.

Mr. PALMER: The adjournment of the debate is the question before us now, sir.

The SPEAKER: I think the honorable Colonial Secretary is addressing himself just as much to the motion before the House as the honorable member for Maranoa did; if license is given to one member, it must be equally given to another.

Mr. WALSH: If the honorable member for Maranoa was out of order, sir, that is no reason why the honorable Colonial Secretary should be; I want to keep the honorable gentleman in check, if possible; I am quite aware that for the whole of this evening it has

been quite a discursive debate, and not at all connected with the Order of the Day.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the honorable member understood my remarks, Mr. Speaker, he would know that they were pertinent to the question; not only that, but the honorable member for Maranoa has based the whole of his arguments on the subject to which I was referring when interrupted by the honorable member for the Warrego. That honorable member has a very different intention when he interrupts me, from that of merely rising to a question of order, and that is, to put me off the subject on which I am speaking, and to prevent me following out the thread of my discourse. When he interrupted me, I was speaking of the Banking Act passed in this colony, and saying that there is nothing in it to compel the banks to keep any capital deposited with them here in the colony, nor is there anything in the Act to prevent them from bringing capital here from other colonies. That is what I wanted to illustrate when I last addressed the House, that wherever the banks find money is most wanted, there the money will flow, just as water will find its own level. The honorable member for Maranoa referred to a great many figures, but although I have been searching, I have not been able to put my hands upon the returns. I understood the honorable member's remarks to apply to the assets and liabilities of the various banks in the colony, and I am not able just now to work out the figures, but I am perfectly aware that these balances vary considerably, and vary just as the wants of the colony vary. I have just found a return which shows that on the 5th March, 1874, the balance in favor of the several banks, six in number, which is the whole number in the colony—the balance of assets over liabilities was over half-a-million, and that now it is something like £85,000; but I take it that if it is necessary to have a larger amount of money in the colony in the event of these lands being offered for sale, this money will find its way into the colony again through the banks, as they are the custodians of money to a very considerable extent. As I stated at the outset, the banks here, with one exception, are branches of those in the mother country or in other colonies, and for that reason the money will find its way here when wanted.

Mr. WALSH: Mr. Speaker—Sir, surely after the charges which have been brought against the honorable Colonial Treasurer of falsifying returns to a certain extent, or of allowing them to be falsified—I do not say for one moment he did it, for that would be impossible—and surely after the very able speeches we have heard this evening—the most able, I do not hesitate to say, that have been delivered this session, and which have been totally unanswered by the Government—surely I say, sir, after those speeches, the

Government are not going to force us to continue the debate at this late hour. If the Premier, instead of advising his henchman, and instead of interrupting me by talking, will allow me to say what I have to say, the progress of the business will be better. Well, I was going to say, that if the Government think they are going to force us to a division now, they are mistaken. I say, that when such important statements have been made and such serious charges have been brought against the Government, all affecting the ability of it to make these railways—when these charges have been made by the honorable member for Maranoa in, undoubtedly, one of the ablest speeches I have ever heard in this chamber, and when he was followed by one of the ablest speeches from the honorable member for East Moreton, it is more than this House can submit to, to be told that we are to go to a division without some reply from the Government. I take credit to myself, sir, for the able speeches we have had this evening, simply because I prevented the Government the other evening, against the protestations of their own side, from dividing. Those honorable members would have snuffed out the ablest debate if they could, some hours ago, because they thought the honorable leader of the Opposition had gone away, and would have pressed the second reading to a division; but I tell the Government that there are several honorable members on this side who are quite capable of addressing themselves to this question, and who have a perfect right to insist upon being allowed an opportunity of doing so. I do not profess myself to have much ability, but at the same time I have a good deal to say upon it, and as I moved the adjournment of the debate on the last occasion, I should have spoken long ago had I not been intercepted by an honorable member who was able to do more justice to it than I could. Seeing that it has been the rule of the session not to continue the debates after ten o'clock, I trust honorable members will see that it is of no use trying to force this question to a division this evening. The speeches of the honorable members for Maranoa and East Moreton are speeches which should sink deeply into the minds of honorable members, and the Government should themselves consider them and see what points have been raised in them, and what valuable information they contained. For that reason I shall strenuously oppose going to a division, and, in fact, if honorable members will assist me, I will promise that there shall be no division this evening. I should like to know whether the Government intend to consent to an adjournment, or do I understand the Premier that he is determined the debate shall be finished now?

The PREMIER: If the honorable member will sit down, I will tell him.

Mr. WALSH: No; the honorable gentleman knows what that means. Does the

honorable member say that there shall not be a postponement?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Stick to the question.

Mr. WALSH: The honorable member tells me to stick to the question; if I do so I shall set him a good example to follow in future. There will be no division on this question to-night, until the Ministers, until the public—for I go further than the Ministers—have had an opportunity of weighing well the vital arguments which have been advanced in this chamber this evening on this very extraordinary railway policy of the Government.

Mr. LORD said: I hope, sir, that this debate will be decided to-night, as this is the third evening which has been occupied by it, and I think that sufficient time has been given to honorable members to express their views on it. I hope the honorable member for the Warrego will not find any honorable member to support him in what may be termed factious opposition. If I thought that that honorable member, by anything he could say, would influence one vote in this House, I should support him in not going to a division; but I hold that all the talking for another week would not influence one honorable member of this House as to the way in which he should vote on the second reading of the Bill before us. Before sitting down I should like to correct a statement made by the honorable member for Port Curtis, to the effect that in regard to the Gympie people, he believed that the majority of them did not want a railway, and that others were in favor of having a railway to Noosa instead of to Maryborough. I do not know where he gained that information, but I may tell him plainly that it is not correct; for, from my knowledge of the people of Gympie, they are very anxious indeed that this line from Maryborough to Gympie should be made. It was stated at a public meeting I held a short time ago, that they did not want a railway to Noosa, and they were perfectly satisfied that if a railway was made in the district, it must come from Maryborough, until it was fully proved that Noosa could be made a port. It is my intention to vote for the second reading of the Bill, because I consider the principle of it is good, namely, of setting apart lands within the colony to pay for the cost of construction of railways. I do not mean that the lands should all be sold before the lines are made, and it would be folly for any one to suppose such a thing, as we must borrow the money first and sell the lands afterwards; that I think is provided for in the thirteenth clause of the Bill. There is a clause which I shall like to see amended when the Bill is in committee—or rather, part of a clause—I allude to section 3 of clause 8 of the Bill; and if no other honorable member moves an amendment in it, I shall do so, to the effect that conditional selection be

allowed to take place within the railway reserves. I am quite certain that a good deal of land will be alienated in that way, and I do not see why it should not be. I hope the House will not support the honorable member for the Warrego, in what I may term his factious opposition.

Mr. PALMER: Sir, as far as I am concerned personally, I am quite prepared for a division; but if the honorable member for the Warrego, who has not yet spoken on the main question, wishes to speak, I think the Government should allow him an opportunity of doing so; I believe he is the only honorable member who has not spoken on the main question, and there is no doubt he is entitled to speak on it. The honorable Colonial Secretary has replied to the honorable member for Maranoa, and I might just as well reply to the remarks of the Attorney-General, and we might thus go on for weeks longer with the debate. That, however, does not alter the question; the honorable member for Warrego has not spoken, and he is determined that he will not be left alone in that respect; he is entitled to speak, and, therefore, I can promise that he will not be left to the tender mercies of the Treasury benches, but that we shall support him. I understood that the honorable member for Maranoa was to be the last to speak, or otherwise I should have pressed for a division at ten o'clock. In regard to the contradiction given by the honorable member for Gympie to some statements made by me, all I can say is, that I gained my information from the public prints; a certain section may wish for a railway to Gympie from Maryborough, but a great many persons do not; it is a matter of opinion. I would again urge upon the Government to give way, and let the debate come on to-morrow; it cannot last much longer.

The PREMIER: Sir, in answer to the honorable member for Port Curtis, I may say that this is now the third evening of the debate on this Bill. If I recollect right, in the House of Commons, where there are between five and six hundred members, the debate on the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill only occupied three days, and yet four days is asked for this Railway Reserves Bill. The honorable member for Maranoa has made two long speeches, the adjournment having been moved in order to give him an opportunity of replying to my honorable colleague, the Treasurer, and I presume that if some one will move the adjournment to-morrow, we shall have another speech from the honorable gentleman. I think we should come to a division this evening; and in regard to the honorable member for Warrego not having spoken, that honorable member has been in the refreshment room for some hours when he might have been in the House, and have made a speech.

Mr. WALSH: I rise to a point of order, sir. The honorable member is referring to

my absence, and my being in the refreshment room.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr. WALSH: Well, then, sir, I rise to make a personal explanation. It is not true, sir, as stated by the Premier, that I have wasted my time in the refreshment room. I believe I have been in the House this evening longer than the honorable gentleman has; and if I left the chamber, it was because there was some honorable member speaking, and I saw I should not have a chance of addressing the House for some time. No honorable member wastes more time in the refreshment room than the Premier himself.

Mr. AMHURST said: I am sorry, sir, the Government refuse to assent to the motion for adjournment, as they must know that they will gain no time by so doing. I think, sir, the honorable member for Warrego should have a fair hearing, as he is an ex-Minister. The Government ought to be ashamed of refusing it to him, except that if anything could make them ashamed of themselves they would have retired long ago. I beg to move—

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. WALSH said: I really do not intend to enforce the expression of my opinion upon the House. I see members generally are weary of debate, and the Government are afraid of debate, and I will not enforce my right to address the House and prolong the discussion. If the Government are determined not to allow the adjournment of the debate, I shall simply enter my protest that I have not had an opportunity of addressing myself to the question. I was prevented this evening from doing so, and at this time of night I am not going to inflict upon my friends the tediousness of having to sit and listen to me. The Government are simply afraid of hearing what I have to say, because if I had an opportunity of doing so, I could point out the absurdity of the boundaries they have defined, and I could instruct them geographically. But I shall not take the trouble to do so. I would try to save the country from being committed to a scheme which will land us in insolvency, and which shows how utterly incapable this Government is to legislate for the interests of the country; but if it is the determination of the majority, I am willing to let it go. I see I can do no good, and I will not ask my friends on this side of the House to sustain me in the hopeless task I should be undertaking. I shall, therefore, offer no further opposition if the Government are determined not to allow the debate to be adjourned.

Mr. AMHURST then withdrew his motion for the adjournment of the House.

Question—That the debated be adjourned, put and negatived.



Question—That this Bill be now read a second time, put, and the House divided with the following result:—

AYES, 20.

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

NOES, 15.

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

Whereupon Bill read a second time.