

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 1876

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 8 November, 1876.

Oaths Bill.—Crown Lands Alienation Bill.—Assent to Bill.—The New Cemetery.—Resumption of Lands.—The Contingent Account of the Council.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Railway Reserves Bill.

OATHS BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Assembly returning the Oaths Act Amendment Bill, which had been passed by that House without amendment.

CROWN LANDS ALIENATION BILL.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL referred to the "count out" of the House, on Friday last, when the message of the Legislative Assembly upon the amendments in the Crown Lands Alienation Bill was under consideration, and said that the Order of the Day having lapsed as a result of the absence of a quorum in committee, it was necessary now that the order should be restored to the paper. That must be done in the ordinary way by notice of motion, unless the House would consent to his making a motion now, without notice, that the further consideration of the message be an Order of the Day for Friday next.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Then, with the permission of the House, he should move—

That the Committee of the Whole House, for the consideration of the message from the Legislative Assembly, No. 2, of the 2nd November, be resumed, and stand an Order of the Day for Friday next.

Question put and passed.

ASSENT TO BILL.

A message was presented from His Excellency the Governor, informing the House that His Excellency had assented to The Sheep Brands Bill.

THE NEW CEMETERY.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY asked—

Have the Government had under their consideration the desirability of opening a new cemetery immediately adjacent to the Brisbane and Ipswich Railway, in the vicinity of Oxley, with a view to closing the one now in use near Toowong, in consequence of that locality becoming thickly populated, and also on account of its inconvenience of access and unsuitable nature of the ground for interments?—If so, what steps have been taken to meet this important requirement on the part of the inhabitants of Brisbane and Toowong, and the public generally?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL answered—

The matter referred to has not been formally considered by the Government; but it has been incidentally brought under their notice, and will have careful consideration at the earliest possible date.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY moved the adjournment of the House, for the purpose of making a few remarks on the question. A considerable number of persons, he said, had recently expressed the hope that some steps

would be taken on the part of the Government to make better provision for a cemetery than was afforded by the one at present in use. He need not detain the House by stating more than that the cemetery was fully three-quarters of a mile from both the main road and the railway; and that its distance from town was so great as to necessitate driving out the whole way, or having a conveyance waiting at the Toowong railway station, on the occasion of a funeral. Something should be done, as in other communities, where the public convenience was considered, to obviate the great inconvenience of the existing state of things. Although the ground had been well tested before, yet, since interments had commenced there, it was found not suitable. Further, the augmentation of population in the neighborhood was so great that the question of a cemetery in its midst became a very serious one, and it could not be upon any consideration desirable that interments should be continued for a lengthened period. No doubt there would be brought to bear against the closing of the cemetery, now, the fact that many persons had a vested interest in it from the circumstance that they had friends buried there; but they could have no special objection to the general closing of the cemetery, if their interests were preserved for some little time by their being permitted to make interments in the portions of land which they had leased. It must be obvious to all who were anxious for the public health that another site should be selected for a cemetery at a greater distance from large centres of population; and he thought that the locality indicated in his question afforded an excellent opportunity for a suitable selection. He was actuated, in suggesting that locality, by the consideration of the fitness of the ground generally for the purpose desiderated. It was a very poor country; it was a deep loose soil, and was well drained. A part of it belonged to the Bishopric Endowment of the Church of England; but there was a large tract of land that could, no doubt, be purchased back by the Government at a very moderate price. It was the most suitable site, about a mile beyond Oxley, and contiguous to the railway, and was suitable in every way; and there was enough land for all requirements. The distance was not too great, having regard to the convenience of the railway; and a cemetery so situated would be a boon to the poorer inhabitants of the metropolis. In the case of Sydney, the metropolitan cemetery was at Haslam's Creek, about fifteen miles distant; and, being accessible by railway, it had been found that the expenses of funerals had been decreased about one-half what they were under previous arrangements. The funeral trains ran direct to the cemetery, and there was no necessity for the intervention of any other class of conveyance. But the great consideration was the health of the

city. At present, Brisbane did not extend within a considerable distance of the cemetery; but in a few years the locality would be thickly populated, not only Toowong, but the suburbs around in every direction. There was one other point for consideration, that of expense. He believed that there had been expended already on the cemetery about £2,000. That bore a very small proportion, indeed, to the amount which would have to be expended ultimately in drainage and various other necessary requirements to render the cemetery accessible. Further, if the cemetery should be closed, within a reasonable time, the Government would have a considerable area of land to dispose of without detriment to any interests acquired by that portion of the public that had friends interred there; and doubtless there would be ample funds realised to enclose with neat fences the land occupied by the dead, and to preserve effectually the monuments of affection erected there, and to make some provision for a new cemetery such as he had indicated.

The Hon. W. THORNTON, who was almost inaudible, was understood to assert that there were few matters in which it was so difficult to please the British public as the selection of a site for a burial-ground. The site objected to by the Honorable Mr. Gregory had been selected with a great deal of care and consideration, and, until now, he (Mr. Thornton) was always under the impression that a more favorable one could not be chosen. He could not see the force of the honorable gentleman's argument that because a large population was growing up in the neighborhood, the cemetery established should not be used. The fact was, that if the cemetery was shifted from Toowong to Oxley, a large population would grow up around it at the latter place. It was a very peculiar thing that people did select dwellings in the vicinity of burial grounds. But there were interests involved in the cemetery as established now. Apart from the interests of those families, some of whose members were buried there, he mentioned stonemasons and other persons whose presence was a convenience to the public. He considered that the removal of the cemetery to Oxley would add considerably to the expense of funerals to persons living in town. If people chose to settle near the cemetery, as was the case at Toowong, that was their own look-out. The Honorable Captain Simpson was the first who had settled in the neighborhood; but even now there were no houses in the vicinity of the cemetery. The Honorable Mr. Gregory talked about selling the ground. There was something harsh in that idea; and in that of making a park of the land. A great many persons were buried there, and it would be a matter of very great annoyance to those who wished to be buried in the same place for the cemetery to be turned to other uses. He (Mr. Thornton) was quite satisfied that if a cemetery were established at Oxley, the very same objec-

tions would be urged against it that were now advanced against Toowong; and, indeed, he did not know where a cemetery could be and a population not grow up around it. It would be far more advisable for an agitation to be set on foot for a railway to the cemetery, than to agitate for the removal of the cemetery.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON, in reference to the remarks of the Honorable Mr. Thornton, said he did not live within two miles and a-half of the cemetery, and that there were several residents within less than half-a-mile of it. Still, knowing as well as any honorable member the circumstances of the case, he might say that the Honorable Mr. Gregory's idea was precisely what he held three or four years ago, and ventilated, when the question was brought before the Council. He then advocated the establishment of an intermediate cemetery between Brisbane and Ipswich which would serve for the two towns. Now, however, he held, it was too late. The money spent on the cemetery at Toowong, since that time, was very great; and the amount of trouble and interest taken in it could not be gauged by any money value. Any honorable member could see that, although the cemetery had not been in use more than two years, yet it was studded all over with monuments of every description; that was to say, the eastern or town end of the reserve, which was made use of. Looking at that, one would think that the rate of mortality in Brisbane had been enormous; but so far from such having been the case, the fact was that two-thirds of the bodies buried in the cemetery had been transferred from the old cemetery in Brisbane. In fact he believed that about two or three months ago, the transfers were going on at such a rate, the Government had to put a stop to them, by making a regulation that no body should be removed until after it had been in the ground twelve months; and that put a stop to the transfers for some time. If the cemetery should be shifted, as he confessed, to the proper place, look at what would be the result. People would not believe that the remains of their friends buried there would be always left or respected; and they would want to transfer them again, as they did before. That would be a great hardship, and a great mistake, if the cemetery could be better managed in some other way. The present cemetery, though not on the best site for the purpose, had been decided on. It consisted of high ridges composed of a sort of shaly, slaty, stuff; but after all, what was the difference? It amounted to about a couple of shillings for sinking each grave. Then, with regard to the question of access, he presumed that honorable members were aware that a proposition had been before the other House and withdrawn on account of the late period of the session, for a rail or tramway to branch from the line between the Milton platform and Toowong station up to

the Cemetery gates—that would give a distance of something short of half a-mile.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: Sixty chains.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: Three-quarters of a-mile, over ground which was a dead flat the whole way. It was somewhat of a swampy nature, but the swampiness was so slight, that the present high road that ran along it was one of the best roads beyond Milton. There would not be the slightest difficulty in making the branch line. As far as he was personally concerned, he would rather that living people would be tempted to tenant the neighbourhood, than that it should be given up to the dead; but, still, what was now urged should have been done three or four years ago, when it was brought before Parliament, and was the best thing that could be done.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN observed that it was satisfactory the proposal was made by the Honorable Mr. Gregory, and that its importance was recognised by the Government. He heard no argument from the Honorable Mr. Thornton, or Captain Simpson, to show that the present cemetery was suited to its purpose; but each argument of theirs tended to show him that it was desirable to make a change. One of the greatest points for the consideration of the House was the health of the city. Though the Honorable Mr. Thornton was fortunately situated in regard to the cemetery, other persons were perhaps compelled by circumstances to live in places they did not wholly approve of. It would be well to anticipate the time when the cemetery could no longer receive occupants. Then, he supposed consent would be given for its removal. But now was the time, before the evil of its presence was magnified. He thought it was necessary for the well-being of society that the cemetery should be removed. There was a very considerable drainage from the higher land of the cemetery. The description of the country by the Honorable Captain Simpson, shaly rock above, and level flat below, showed that all the impurities from the cemetery mixed with the water which was largely used by some of the inhabitants of Toowong. In regard to the suggestion that a tramway should be made, the work would involve more expense than the removal of the cemetery to the place that the Honorable Mr. Gregory spoke about. But cost should not be a consideration in the discussion of a question like that before the House. A cemetery was required that would suit the community for many years to come. He did not quite agree about selling the land, if the cemetery was removed. He thought it should be proclaimed as a reserve unalienable; it would be always respected by those who had laid friends within its precincts; and it could be preserved as a place of resort for the public. As a cemetery, the place was not convenient. He spoke from experience, when he said the

road was very uncomfortable to travel, in such a season as the present, from the heat and the dust and the pace at which funerals were usually conducted. If the railway was used, as suggested, funerals to Oxley would be conducted conveniently and at a very much slighter expense than was now necessarily incurred by the public. The railway was used in such a manner in many large cities, for instance, in Sydney. The cemetery at Haslam's Creek was a very interesting spot, highly cultivated, and tolerably attractive. The same results would be obtained here if the change suggested was made, which he trusted the Government would give effect to.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN : If the evil complained of now was so great as represented by the Honorable Mr. Gregory, with the population centering round Toowong likely to be increased largely it was certain to extend and to become intensified. With regard to one objection made by the Honorable Mr. Thornton, that in the event of the removal of the cemetery to another place, the same objections would soon be raised against it—if the Government provided that land should not be sold in the immediate vicinity of the cemetery, or if sufficient ground was reserved to interpose a good space between the cemetery and private dwellings, that objection would be obviated, and complaints such as were now heard would be avoided. He thought it desirable to remove the cemetery, and that the Government should take the proper steps to provide a new cemetery where it would not interfere with the health of the inhabitants. He felt inclined to support the views of the Honorable Mr. Gregory in the hope that the Government would take the subject into consideration.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY, in reply, suggested that if the part of the cemetery that had been used was fenced in, it would form a parallelogram, and could be preserved from desecration to satisfy fully the friends of those who had been buried there. His object in drawing attention to the subject was that Government should take early steps with the view of getting a suitable place for a cemetery while the country was procurable at a reasonable price; and in the hope that something would be done to save the poorer classes some of the excessive costs to which they were subjected in connection with interments under the existing state of things. Poor people attending funerals must trudge out in the rain, or burning sun and dust, three or four miles, because they could not afford to avail themselves of the railway and provide the means of conveyance from Toowong to the cemetery. If the railway took them to the cemetery as he proposed, the expenses would not be more than a shilling or two each. In New South Wales the expense was infinitesimal compared to that of a wheeled conveyance; and the humblest

could go to and from the cemetery without hardship. He trusted that the subject would be taken into consideration by the Government at an early date.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

RESUMPTION OF LANDS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL brought up the report of the Select Committee on the Resumption of Lands in the Settled Districts, together with the minutes of evidence taken and the proceedings of the committee. On his motion,

The report was ordered to be printed, and a day was named for the consideration in Committee of the Whole of the resolution affirming the resumptions sent up from the Assembly.

THE CONTINGENT ACCOUNT OF THE COUNCIL.

The PRESIDENT said he had to bring under the consideration of the House a question which had been before honorable members twice already; and it was one into the consideration of which the Standing Orders Committee had entered with all the industry which it was capable of evoking. He intended to move the adoption of the report of the Standing Orders Committee on the Contingent Account of the Legislative Council for the year 1875-6. The report recommended that a certain form of Address should be sent to His Excellency the Governor in reference to the matter named, they having been appointed "to draw up a form of Address," "conveying certain resolutions arrived at by this House on the 5th October ultimo." The Address was as follows:—

"LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"To His Excellency WILLIAM WELLINGTON CAIRNS, Esquire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Council of Queensland in Parliament assembled, having come to the following resolution, viz.:—That an Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1875-6 the sum of £65 2s. 5d., as an increase to the Contingent Fund of the Legislative Council for the year ending 30th June, 1876, to meet a deficiency caused by various expenses which have been defrayed, in former years, from the Contingent Fund, but which were fairly chargeable to other votes; and a further sum of £58 14s. 6d., to meet unforeseen expenses arising out of and in connection with the illness and decease of Mr. Henry Johnson, late Clerk of the Parliaments, from whose salary, at different times, whilst holding such office, and during periods of illness, sums amounting in the aggregate to £201 6s. 8d. were deducted,—beg now to intimate the same to Your Excellency."

With regard to the contingent account, he (the President) found that in the first year the Parliament occupied the building, the Council had some difficulty in getting the committee rooms furnished. Some honorable members were present who would remember the occurrence. All the furniture had been used in the old Parliament chambers, and was brought over and made the most of; but the difficulty was so great that it was suggested that honorable members should bring their own chairs. To put things to rights, some portion of the fund for contingencies was spent in providing tables and chairs and general furniture. That was in the first year. Next year, £10 was spent for a clock; and so on—the expenditure being on things which really were not justly chargeable to contingencies, if there had been any opportunity of placing them to a proper account for furniture for the Council. The committee had satisfied themselves of this. The overcharge went on from year to year, from 1869 to 1876, having arisen in that way; the Clerk of Parliaments hoping that he might, perhaps, save the amount in the expenditure of some year, or that there might be some account upon which the charges might be more justifiably made. It was a very small amount for seven years, only £65 2s. 5d. being required; considering, moreover, that, by the evidence of the Colonial Storekeeper, a great many things which passed through the store were charged to the contingent account of the Council, while similar requirements on the part of the Assembly were not charged to its contingent account at all. No doubt the same practice would not be continued in future, because of the discovery now made; but a stop would be put to it. He might point out that if the Assembly wanted extra expenditure in other ways than as an addition to the contingent account, there did not seem to be much difficulty in reference to obtaining it. Such was not the case in regard to the requirements of the Council. Next he came to the question of Mr. Johnson's affairs. The committee found that during the years 1868 and 1870-71, the deceased officer was unable to perform his duties, owing to serious illness; and considerable reductions were made in his salary, which might account for the difficulty he was in during his latter days. The House had allowed, at least, as far as he could judge from what honorable members had stated, that he could not have left the late Mr. Johnson to be turned out on the streets; that, somehow, the sick man must have been provided for.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE PRESIDENT: He felt that he was acting merely as the representative of the House collectively, not as an individual, in doing what he had done regarding the late Clerk of the Council. As far as he could judge, and as he was informed, the demand now made in Mr. Johnson's case was not one that was at all unreasonable. He found that if the other

branch of the Parliament wanted a little increase in its contingent or other expenditure, there was not the slightest difficulty in obtaining it. He asked for only a small sum, which might be very fairly granted from what had been taken from the late officer's salary. He moved—

That the report be now adopted.

THE HON. A. H. BROWN said he had no doubt the report had been prepared with every degree of care. The President referred to the late Clerk of Parliaments, and, as he (Mr. Brown) saw the Chairman of Committees, the Honorable Mr. Roberts, present, perhaps the honorable gentleman, as executor and trustee, would be able to give the House some information in reference to the financial position of the late Clerk of Parliaments at his decease. Very much would depend, one way or other, on what the honorable gentleman could tell the Council. He had no doubt that the House would find means to provide for the liabilities incurred by the President on account of Mr. Johnson. He always thought that pending the information which the Honorable Mr. Roberts could give, it would be quite possible to obtain a portion of salary due to the late Clerk of Parliament towards paying his liabilities. It was, no doubt, in the power of the House; and it would be judicious to apply to the Government for a portion that was kept back, which would fully cover the debt which had been incurred by the President on behalf of the late clerk. He asked—Could the Honorable Mr. Roberts tell the House what the state of the account was in the estate of the late clerk?

THE HON. D. F. ROBERTS: He thought, in round numbers, something like £100. But he might explain that he did not divide the moneys until something was settled about the claim of £46 odd by Deagon. If he got that, or if he knew it was to be paid, then he would know what to do. About £100 was all the money he had received, or paid.

THE HON. F. T. GREGORY said he was very glad to have heard the explanation afforded by the President for bringing up the report. As far as it went, the committee had done all in their power to do, and to that extent it was satisfactory. But he agreed with the Honorable Mr. Brown that the House ought to have some further information in connection with the state of the affairs of the late Clerk of the Council. On the last occasion that the subject was before the Council two main points were discussed about which he considered the House had a right to know something. The report presupposed that expense had been incurred which must be paid; but as to the amount originally due there was nothing to show, nor was there any information afforded of the state of the affairs of the late clerk at his decease, nor whether his state was solvent or not—nothing except a general statement that there were no

funds to meet certain indebtedness. That was not the way in which, he (Mr. Gregory) presumed men of business conducted transactions, however willing they might be to give money out of their own pockets, or to call upon the Government to provide it. Honorable members wished to know some of the circumstances under which they were called upon to act; or, they might be asking for a vote of money which might after all come out of the estate. He observed that the Chairman of Committees, who was the executor in the late clerk's estate, was called upon to furnish information to the committee, which was not furnished however, and he presumed that—not being a member of the committee—after waiting for it, the committee found it necessary to bring up their report without that necessary information. He did not at present wish to prevent the adoption of the report, if the House was satisfied; but even now that information should be furnished.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: As a member of the Standing Orders Committee, he thought he might mention that there were two questions raised on a former occasion with regard to Mr. Johnson's position—first, whether the charges made were fair and reasonable, or excessive; and secondly, as to what means there were in his estate to meet them. As far as the committee were concerned, they had satisfied themselves that the charges were fair. With regard to the other question, the assets of the estate of the deceased clerk, the committee adjourned their meeting on the 25th October to enable the Honorable Mr. Roberts, as executor, to produce a statement of the affairs of the estate, which he undertook to furnish the committee with. From that time, however, to the 1st instant, the honorable gentleman did not attend the committee, and, consequently, they did not get any further information.

The Hon. J. GIBBON: It appeared to him that the only thing wanting now was the statement from the executor of the position in which Mr. Johnson's estate was left. Mr. Johnson appeared to have been in receipt of a considerable salary, which he (Mr. Gibbon) presumed was payable up to the day of his death; and also, as he had heard, his life was insured for £500, which would enable the executors to command funds for all liabilities in the estate. However, it would be highly satisfactory to the House to have an account of the disbursements of those moneys before application was made to His Excellency the Governor to place a sum of £50 or £60 on the Estimates to pay expenses in connection with the last illness of Mr. Johnson. Before they adopted the report, honorable members should endeavor to get a statement from the executor of the position of the affairs of the deceased.

The Hon. D. F. ROBERTS would just explain to the Honorable Mr. Gibbon, that

it was quite true that the late Mr. Johnson's life was insured for £500; but, he might tell him, that the Queensland Bank, under promissory notes to Mr. Holland, held the policy, duly assigned. He did not suppose anything would be got out of the Bank of Queensland, which had held the policy and got the money; he did not get it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: As a member of the Standing Order Committee he was acquainted with certain facts that most honorable members were not familiar with. The question before the House was a very simple one, and lay in a nutshell. Under special and peculiar circumstances, the President guaranteed, on the credit of the House, that certain charges that were likely to accrue in connection with an officer who was then in distress, should be paid. The matter was brought before the House, and he and other honorable members considered that they had not sufficient evidence before them to show that the charges were fairly payable. It was referred back to the committee; and they investigated the account, and, after a very careful scrutiny, they found that the charges were fairly recoverable on the guarantee of the President. Under the circumstances, the House should consider itself bound in honor to pay the amount, and as it was incurred on behalf of an officer of the Council, under peculiar circumstances, when the President, or any other honorable gentleman put in his position, had no option but to take the course that he pursued. It was true that the Standing Orders Committee took every proper precaution to ascertain how much of the amount might be fairly obtained as a dividend out of the state of the late Mr. Johnson; but they had been unable to ascertain it up to the present time. Circumstances might have prevented the executor from giving the information, or he might not have been in a position to assure the committee as to what amount could be obtained out of the estate. The matter remained in that position. The Council was responsible for the payment of £58 14s. 6d., to Mr. Deagon; and it was desirable it should have the money to satisfy his demand. Though the amount was provided for on the Estimates, yet the House would not be bound to pay more than such portion of the claim as might not be met out of Mr. Johnson's estate, which probably would afterwards yield funds to meet his liabilities. He assumed this; because for all the committee or the House knew, or were able to ascertain, there were no assets in the estate at all—everything in the shape of property was held by some mortgagee whose claim it was insufficient to satisfy.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE: There is £100.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: If there were any assets, the Council was entitled to a dividend out of the estate, and to that extent it would be recouped for the expenditure at present proposed.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE trusted that it would not be thought by anyone that the House intended to repudiate the claim made on behalf of the Clerk. He was perfectly satisfied that every honorable member felt how necessary it was that some little inquiry should be made into the matter. On a certain day the committee adjourned for the purpose of receiving a statement of accounts from the executor; they met three times afterwards, but they acquired no information, and had to bring up their report without that statement of accounts for which they had specially adjourned. They could not be surprised that honorable members now inquired for the information which ought to be before the House, and asked why it could not be available. The inquiry brought out the executor, who said he had moneys enough; that he had been contemplating paying that peculiar bill of Deagon's, which by address the House was about to request the Government to put on the Estimates, to be voted by the other House. There was some considerable confusion about the matter. The executor thought he was bound to pay that claim.

The Hon. D. F. ROBERTS: No; he was waiting to know if Deagon's bill would be paid before dividing.

Question put and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The Animals Protection Bill was considered in committee, pursuant to the Order of the Day, and, by consent, the Standing Orders were suspended, on the motion of the Hon. A. H. BROWN, to allow of the Bill passing through all its remaining stages. It was then transmitted to the Assembly, for the concurrence of that House.

RAILWAY RESERVES BILL.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Honorable gentlemen—When I moved the second reading of the Crown Lands Alienation Bill, I stated that the policy of the Government on the land question would be found contained in three measures. Two of these have already had the consideration of the House; the third is now presented by me for your approval. As I stated then, I state again, that the principle of this, the third Bill, is to provide funds for the construction of railways within the districts in which the lands are to be sold. Exclusive of the Western District, which is sufficiently provided for by the Western Railway Act, passed last year, the Government, after mature consideration, arrived at the conclusion that there were four districts within which railways should be more immediately constructed. These are, the Southern District, from Warwick by Stanthorpe to the southern border of the colony; the Districts of Wide Bay and Burnett—first, from Maryborough to Gympie, and thence westward as time and the circumstances of the colony may require; and, second, from Bundaberg towards Mount Perry;—next,

the Central District, extending from the present terminus of the railway already authorised, at the Comet Junction, towards the town of Clermont; and, lastly, the Northern District of the colony, from Townsville to Charters Towers. I think I may take it for granted that in a young colony like this, with a large amount of territory, comprising a vast area of magnificent country awaiting development and settlement, it should be the policy of the Legislature to push forward the means of communication by railways as rapidly as the circumstances of the colony will admit. If, however, any honorable gentlemen doubt the expediency of such a policy, they must be forced to the conclusion that, at all events, taking into consideration the action of the adjoining colonies, which are rapidly pushing forward railway communication and offering increased facilities for the development of the country, we are bound to keep pace with them to open up the resources of this country, and to make it as attractive as possible. The questions before us, now, therefore, are—Do the circumstances of the colony warrant us in extending railway communication? and, Are the proposed lines suitable for the purposes contemplated? I do not think any honorable gentleman will deny that the colony was never in a more prosperous condition than at the present time; and that, being in such a condition, we are warranted in pushing forward railway extension as the best means of insuring a continuance of her prosperity. I think also that I shall be able to show that the railways we propose are such as the colony in her present condition requires. With regard to the extension from Warwick to the border of New South Wales, I have gathered from the expressed opinions of honorable gentlemen in previous debates, that they are almost unanimous in agreeing that this extension should be carried out immediately. This work will not only have the effect of developing the rich mineral district of Stanthorpe, but will be the means of tapping the rich agricultural and mineral district of New England, in New South Wales, and directing more thoroughly towards the metropolis of Queensland the trade that is already beginning to flow thence in this direction. It will be also ultimately the means of connecting the main trunk lines of the two colonies, and thus secure direct railway communication between this and the southern capitals. The extent of railway to be constructed from Warwick to the Border will be about 68½ miles, consisting of two divisions; first, the extension to Stanthorpe, comprising 44 miles, and next, the extension from Stanthorpe to the Border, 24½ miles. The country has been surveyed more than once, and an estimate, which may be treated, I think, as tolerably accurate, has been made, that the whole of that railway can be constructed for £479,000; or at the rate of £6,970 per mile. Proceeding northward, and coming to Wide Bay and Burnett, it is possible that some honorable

gentlemen, at first sight, may think that the district is not so fairly entitled to railway extension as the district to which I have just been referring; but I doubt not reflection will show that if any district of the colony is entitled to the consideration of the Legislature it is the Wide Bay District. A debt of gratitude is, I think, owing by the whole colony to that district for its being the means, when we were in our most depressed condition, of bringing Queensland into notoriety and pushing the colony forward to prosperity, which has still continued. The Gympie gold fields, it cannot be denied, gave a great impetus both to immigration and trade when we were in very low water; and I do not think there has been ever anything like justice accorded to the district since that time.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Further than that, it will be found on reference to statistics that the trade, both exports and imports, of Maryborough is of very considerable extent. It will be found on reference to the returns of the last five years, that the imports into Maryborough amount to about £804,557, whilst the exports thence amount to £1,427,395; and the trade is still increasing. The returns show that there is an important amount of business transacted in the Wide Bay District, which, at all events warrants attention. Honorable gentlemen must also be aware that not only is there a very valuable gold-field at Gympie, to the south-westward, but there is also in and about that neighborhood a large amount of undeveloped mineral wealth, which is only waiting an easy means of transit to the coast for exportation, which cannot be secured by the existing means of communication. The roadway is in such a deplorable condition that I feel quite satisfied, having practical experience, it would be impossible for it to be put into anything like a permanently satisfactory state at a cost anything less than that of the railway proposed to be constructed in that direction. The distance from Maryborough to Gympie by the proposed route is 65 miles. Several surveys have been made between the two places; and the estimated cost is £339,860, or £5,198 per mile. That estimate, I may say, has been very carefully compiled, and I think it will be found as nearly accurate as it is possible for an estimate to be. The Mount Perry District occupies a position somewhat similar to the Gympie district. I do not think it would be possible to find in any part of the world—certainly, in any part of Australia—a greater amount of mineral wealth than is shown to exist under the surface of the Mount Perry District. The means of communication between Mount Perry and the sea coast might be described as amounting to nothing at all. It is impracticable to get heavy traffic across the range; and there is, accordingly, only one mine, which is in the hands of capitalists, in operation; and the immense wealth of the district, therefore,

lies undeveloped comparatively. We, therefore, propose that something like justice shall be done to the district by extending a railway from Bundaberg towards Mount Perry. The distance proposed at present is 42 miles, to what may be called almost the centre of the district, Moolboolaman; and the estimated cost is £198,997, or about £4,795 per mile. In the Central District the railway has been already authorised to be constructed westward from Rockhampton as far as the Comet Junction. We now propose that it shall be extended from the Comet Junction to Clermont; not in a direct line, because it has been found, after careful and elaborate surveys, that by proceeding in a direct line, although the distance will be shorter, yet the expense will be more than by proceeding in a north-westerly direction by Emerald Downs. By extending the railway to Emerald Downs, I believe a double advantage will be gained in addition to the saving of cost. Easy access will be given from that point to the rich districts of Springsure and Tambo; and we shall be opening up the easiest means of communication with what has been described as the richest agricultural district in the Australian Colonies, the Diamantina country. With regard to the northernmost line of railway proposed, from Townsville to Charters Towers, the Government are not in possession of such complete and accurate information as they have of the other lines. But, however, we have returns from the port of Townsville which indicate that that district is one of considerable importance; and we know from experience that the mineral wealth in the neighborhood of Charters Towers appears to be, at present, at all events, inexhaustible, and that it has been thus far a source of great benefit to the colony. The trade returns from Townsville are somewhat in excess of those from Maryborough. During the past five years, the value of the imports amounted to £835,516, and of exports the value was £1,931,800. That, I think, must be considered very satisfactory; and, taken in connection with the fact that the construction of the railway will develop the resources of the district which have not yet been touched, there should be no objection on the part of this Council to the Northern District having the same privilege accorded to it as is accorded to Wide Bay and Burnett, and being placed on a similar footing. When the Legislature passed the Western Railway Act, last session, it affirmed the principle that, in future, railways should be constructed out of moneys derived from the sale of the lands in the districts to be benefited by the railways. While the subject was under consideration, doubts were expressed whether that was a sound principle to follow. The same doubts have been raised elsewhere during the discussion of the Bill now before the House, and it has been urged that the only sound principle to adopt is to borrow money out of the colony for the purpose of constructing the

railways within it. I think a consideration, or comparison, of the two principles will be instructive; and I flatter myself that I shall be able to show in a very few words that the principle of the Western Railway Act is the sounder principle of the two. The total length of railways in the colony is 398 miles. These railways are worked at a loss of £160,000 per annum; that is to say, after taking into consideration the net earnings of the railways, which is £40,000, we have to pay as interest on loans contracted for the purpose of constructing them the sum of £160,000 per annum; that is, very nearly £1 per head per annum for the total inhabitants of the colony. Those railways cost in construction £3,284,855, or, in round numbers, three and a-quarter millions sterling. If that money had been derived from the sales of land, according to the principle embodied in the Western Railway Act, six and a-half million acres of land out of the six hundred million acres of which this territory is composed, would have been sold at a cost of not less than ten shillings per acre! The same amount of land held under pastoral lease has realised only £10,000 per annum. I have already stated that the net earnings of our present railways, to which I am now referring, are £40,000 per annum; so that, on that point alone the colony is a loser to the extent of £30,000 per annum. But, if we go further, and take into consideration the actual loss that is yearly accrued to the colony in the shape of interest on the public debt contracted for the construction of the railways, and which, as I have stated, is at the present time £160,000 per annum, the total loss to the colony is £190,000 per annum, which we sustain through having borrowed money to construct the existing railways instead of having sold land to the extent of six and a half millions of acres, which has been bringing in to the State only £10,000 each year. In addition, there is another fact that should be taken into consideration. The moneys that have been borrowed for the construction of those railways are a burden upon the whole population of the colony; or, in other words, the interest payable on the debt that has been contracted is paid by the whole of the inhabitants of every district. Now, I should think it a great act of injustice that a person at Cooktown, say, should have to pay interest on the cost of construction of the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich; or, that persons in the extreme north, who could derive no possible benefit from the construction of a railway here in the south should be liable for the expenditure incurred on it. When we borrow money for the construction of railways, we impose a burden on the whole community. Instead of doing so, if we adopted the principle of the Western Railway Reserve Act, to make the district in which the railway is to be constructed pay for the cost of construction out of the proceeds of land sold, the railway would be con-

structed without in any way pressing on the community at large. The comparison, therefore, is entirely in favor of the principle of constructing railways out of moneys derived from the sale of land in the immediate vicinity of those railways. The only arguments which appear to have been used in objecting to the principle are, that the land is the capital of the colony, and that in disposing of our land we are parting with our capital; and that we are acting unfairly to those persons who have lent us money on the public credit of the colony. I think that argument is fallacious. We do not, when we sell the land and put the proceeds into railways, part with any capital at all. All that we do is to make a change in the investment of our capital. Our railways are permanent and reproductive works, increasing in productiveness, and therefore, in value, every year, I have shown that from their earnings, if we construct them out of the proceeds of land sales, we shall get a far larger return than if we leave the land in occupation as at present. Further than that, there will be no interference with the claims, as I may call them, of the public creditor, by the adoption of that principle. The public creditor lent us his money on the credit of the colony, that is, on the security of what is called the capital which the colony possesses; in other words, he knew that if the ordinary income of the colony was insufficient to repay his loans, he would be paid out of the capital of the colony. But if that argument is pushed against the principle I advocate, it is of equal force against incurring any further debt whatever; because if we make a further charge on our capital by a fresh loan, we are lessening the security of the public creditor. And certainly we should be making a further charge on the community which a large proportion of the people of the colony should not be burdened with. But here, on the principle we propose, we only change our capital from one class of investment into another. This investment will, at the outset, be reproductive; and as population increases and settlement extends, it will become more and more productive every year. The Government look at the question in that light. They consider that the principle of the Western Railway Act is a sound principle, and one that should be extended to the construction of railways throughout the different districts of the colony that require railways; and they accordingly propose to set apart four areas, to be styled railway reserves, the land in each being saleable for the construction of railways in the districts where they are situated;—the cost of the works will be defrayed out of the proceeds of the sale of the land within those reserves. Honorable members have the maps before their eyes, showing the nature of the reserves as proposed by the Bill and described in its schedule. I shall, therefore, now simply state what the areas of those reserves are respectively. The Southern Extension Railway Reserve

contains 3,400,000 acres; the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts Railway Reserve contains about 13,183,400 acres; the Central District Railway Reserve comprises an area of 8,770,000 acres; and the Kennedy Railway Reserve has an area of 8,000,000 acres. In all, the total acreage of the four reserves is 33,353,000 acres. The railways which I have already informed the House the Government have in contemplation amount in the aggregate to 365 miles. The total estimated cost of their construction is £1,916,860; or, in round numbers, two millions sterling. Now, assuming that the lands within those reserves will be sold at the minimum fixed by the Western Railway Act, which is the minimum at which it is anticipated they will be sold under the present Bill, there will be required for the construction of the whole of the railways to which I have referred, the alienation of 3,833,720 acres, or in round numbers, four millions out of the 33,353,000 acres in the reserves; leaving a balance available for works of a similar character to be constructed hereafter of over 29,000,000 acres. I may state that the income derivable from four millions of acres in the several districts is at present something under £6,000 per annum; and honorable members, if they will consider for a moment, and go back to the line of argument that I adopted in the early part of my remarks, will see that if we were to borrow for the construction of the railways the two millions of money that will be required, and pay four per cent. for the loan, which is I believe the current rate, we should have to pay in the shape of interest annually £80,000;—so that according to the proposed scheme, we lose in the shape of rents an income of £6,000, and there is a possible gain of £74,000. So much for the adoption of the course the Government now propose. In addition to that, we have, as I already stated, a permanent investment of the capital disposed of in the shape of our railways which are continuing reproductive works. Of course it would be highly undesirable to put all the land into the market at once, so that it will be necessary for Parliament to make provision by a small loan in anticipation of moneys that will be derived from the sale of land. It is accordingly proposed by this Bill in the last clauses, that for the practical initiation of the works, such amounts as Parliament may from time to time vote for the purpose, shall be applied towards the construction of the railways in the several districts—Parliament being asked to vote separate sums for each district. Each district is to have a separate trust account of its own. The moneys that would be advanced by Parliament are to be placed to the credit of the account, and the moneys that will be derived from the sale of lands, from time to time, must be applied, in the first instance, as proposed by clause twelve, to the repayment with interest at five per cent. of any advances that may have been made by the Treasurer out of the consolidated revenue,

and the surplus is to be kept to the credit of the account, and to be applied to the construction of railways as occasion may arise. So that honorable members will see that although this Bill proposes, by anticipation, that several railways shall be constructed, yet there is no provision at all in it for the appropriation of any money except the money that may be derived from the sale of lands for the construction of those railways; it provides simply that certain lands shall be available for the purpose, whenever Parliament in its wisdom shall direct the railways to be constructed. I have said that it would be undesirable to put the whole lands into the market at once. It would be equally undesirable that they should be withdrawn from pastoral occupation until actually alienated by the State. Provision is therefore made, that when resumptions are made with the view of ultimate sale for the purposes of the Bill, such resumptions shall not have the effect of withdrawing the land from the occupation of the pastoral lessee—I am now alluding to the provisions of clause five—but the land shall continue in the occupation of the lessee until it has actually been reserved for public purposes, or actually sold or alienated. On the reservation or alienation of the land, the lessee shall be entitled to rebate of his rent proportionate to the area so taken. There is also a provision that until actual reservation or alienation, the pastoral lessee shall have the power of exercising his preemptive right under the fifty-fourth section of the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869; so that in this respect, as in a former Bill considered by the House, the Government propose to do as little injury to the pastoral lessee as possible consistent with the carrying into effect of the principles of the measures introduced. The only other point to which I need refer is the manner in which the lands are to be disposed of. Section seven provides that lands within the railway reserves shall be subject to alienation under any Act that may be in force for the time being regulating the leasing and alienation of Crown lands, with this modification:—Having in view, of course, what is the main object of the Bill, to derive revenue from the sale of lands; when lands are to be put up to auction the maximum limit can be increased to 5,120 acres. As I have already stated, the main object of the Bill is to derive revenue from the sale of lands for the purpose of the construction of public works. We have at present outside of the proposed reserves, and we purpose still further to increase the same, areas available for selection by conditional purchasers. These areas will in all probability be sufficient to meet the demands of conditional purchasers for some time to come; and I take it that the policy of the Government who will have the administration of the Bill for the time being will be to resort as far as possible, without doing injustice to the legitimate demands of the people who may require land for settlement, to the auc-

tion system for the sale of land. This will introduce to the colony a large number of persons who are prepared to invest their money and do with the land exactly as they like, untrammelled by conditions. I think I have now gone over all the leading principles of the Bill before me; and I shall not burden the House by dwelling further on the subject. I have no doubt honorable members will give the Bill a dispassionate consideration; and I look forward to their facilitating the passing of the Bill and the adoption of the principles which it embodies. I have now to move—

That this Bill be read a second time.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he thought for some time that the Postmaster-General would have avoided the last part of his speech, which must have been made very much against his inclination. He considered that the worst part of the Bill was clause seven, which acted against the whole principle of the measure. The Postmaster-General affirmed that the Railway Reserves Bill was for the purpose of providing money for railway construction, and that it provided for the sale of land by auction; but how any Government could allow their own Bill to be so mutilated as this one was by the introduction of clause seven, which allowed conditional leasing of land, he did not know. However, the Government had allowed it, and now it would be the duty of the Council to amend that portion of the Bill. He believed that honorable gentlemen, looking at the Bill dispassionately, would deem it their duty to eliminate that portion of it, at all events; and that, in doing so, the Government would be very much obliged to them. A great amount of injustice would be done to the country, and to the present occupiers of the land, by allowing that clause to remain; for there were men who had expended a large amount of capital on their land, hundreds of thousands of pounds, in fact, and it was now to be taken away from them. Although it might be necessary to bring in a Bill providing for the construction of future railways out of the proceeds of the sale of lands, yet he hardly thought such a measure was urgent, or that it was for the good of the colony to take the lands now. Railways, the House had seen, would be profitable to the country, and if they were to be undertaken, the requisite funds must also be provided for their construction. He could hardly follow the arguments of the Postmaster-General, who had done the best he could by calculating that a certain number of millions of acres of land would be sold at an upset price of ten shillings per acre, and that the receipts would make the railways. Very many acres of that land—the greatest portion of it—would be quite unsaleable; a large portion of it would not be saleable for many years. He did not think there would be any opposition to the second reading of the Bill, and he was merely stating what struck him since he read it.

It appeared to him that the Bill as first brought in by the Government was a far superior measure to the one before the Council, and he trusted that when it left that chamber, it would be in very much the same condition as when it was first presented to Parliament by the Government. He trusted, also, that the Council's amendments would receive the support of the Government in another place. The Postmaster-General told the House that the principle of the Bill was to take about fifty miles of land on each side of the proposed railways. In examining the map of the Central division, he (Mr. Prior) found that, making Emerald Downs the central point, the proposed railway line would cut the extreme corner of the reserve. The Central district railway reserves had been made with the intention that the line might go in a certain direction through it; but now it appeared the railway was to go somewhere else. It was, therefore, desirable to know if it was the intention of the Government to alter the schedule, because otherwise there would be no land on one side of the line reserved. The land would be all on one side. Honorable members who had travelled over that part of the country would know that there must be some spots saleable along the other side of the line of railway. With regard to the Warwick and Stanthorpe Railway, without going into the merits of the case, it appeared to him very probable that the New South Wales Government would be inclined to take their railway much further to the westward, rather than to meet the Queensland line on the Border in the direction of Stanthorpe; and, certainly, before going beyond Stanthorpe, the Government should ascertain where the New South Wales Government meant to bring their line. Because, until that was known, it would be absurd to continue the line to the Border; at any rate, there would be no great advantage in it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It was not proposed in New South Wales to meet any line on the Border.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: With respect to the principle of borrowing the money or selling the land, he must say that he agreed with the Postmaster-General that it would be far better to sell the land, and with the proceeds to make the railways; but the question was, whether, during the progress of the railway, sufficient land would be sold to finish the work. He thought it was very improbable that sufficient land would be sold. The Postmaster-General said, and he was glad to hear him, that it was the intention of the Government to distress as little as possible the present holders of the land; and it struck him that the resumption of a portion only, say, one-half, of the runs in the railway districts, would be most advisable, leaving the other portions of the runs to the present pastoral occupants. In fact, to those men who had made the country, an inde-

feasible lease should be given, covering a sufficiently long time to pay them for the improvements they had made and the moneys they had expended. The people in the outside districts deserved to be considered. It was right for the colony that the adventurers who had gone so far out should receive some sympathy and protection. He agreed with an amendment that the Honorable Mr. Gregory had proposed for dividing the runs in the Western Railway Reserve. It would be well if the Government would take that view of the case now under consideration, because the land which would be locked up for five or ten years would, at the expiration of the term, be worth more and would realise more for railway funds than if it should be sold before the work was finished. By that time, too, there would be a large population in the country, and many persons settled along the railway, who would have to secure a certain amount of land for the purpose of carrying on their business. The House must look at the subject in that way. If pastoral tenants were compelled to remove at once, it would be at a ruinous sacrifice. He should like the Postmaster-General to inform the Council by-and-bye, how the line was likely to go on Emerald Downs, and if it was the intention of the Government to alter the schedule so that the proposed railway should go through the middle of the reserve, and that there might be something like fifty miles of land on each side. He would support the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR said he had little expected to have lived to see five gentlemen, Ministers of the Crown, so thoroughly ignorant of the value of the lands of the colony as to reserve them for sale at ten shillings an acre, for pastoral purposes. He would guarantee that of the millions of acres in the Western Railway Reserve for making the line to Roma, ninety per cent. would not fetch one shilling an acre. The Government had taken one hundred and seventy-five thousand acres from him, and if they offered it to him to-morrow at a shilling an acre, he would not take it.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS: Oh!

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: It was that Wallah land. The Postmaster-General said the Government were going to borrow money to commence the railways that would never be paid for from the lands. He was perfectly astounded that they should imagine they could sell land enough to pay for them. A very few years would prove the truth of his statement, that they never would. He was prepared to say that the land along the line of the Stanthorpe Railway would not pay for greasing the engine wheels; for it was the most villainous description from Warwick to the boundary. It was the same with the other reserves. Was ever such a farce witnessed? There might be a little good land at Jimbour and a little about Mount Abundance; but it was a great pity that five

or six Ministers had not taken horse and gone to the trouble of seeing into the character of the land for themselves. It astonished him beyond measure that a man of the experience of George Thorn, who was an old colonist and knew the country in the Western Railway Reserve, should ever have allowed such a thing to pass. He (Mr. Taylor) did not object to the second reading of the Bill; but he warned honorable gentlemen that they would find themselves deceived as to its efficacy before the end of two years. He did not like borrowing. But let the Government borrow money to begin with; and, if the land did not sell to give money to carry on the railways, let them go no further. The Postmaster-General had told them that the colony was losing £160,000 a year by railways, and yet they were going deeper into loans, and would double, or more than double, the public debt. He supposed that, in committee, the Bill would be considerably altered, but he should support the second reading now.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON supposed that almost every other honorable member would not object to the second reading of the Bill. At the same time, he felt confident that it would be absolutely necessary to make very important amendments in the Bill in committee. There were certain points requiring explanation, as must be obvious to every honorable member who took the trouble to look at the map. The Western Railway Reserve was laid out on the principle that fifty miles of land on each side of the railway should be available for sale, the proceeds of the land to be used for the construction of the line. That was a principle, whether it was right or wrong; and for his own part he believed it might be found to be good and useful. If honorable members would turn to the other reserves, it would puzzle them to understand on what principle they had been formed. Taking the Central Reserve, the railway cut off one small corner of it; consequently the greater portion of the land that was to be taken to provide the cost of construction would not have any advantage at all from the railway, some of it being distant eighty miles; whilst the country which would be most benefited by the line, and through which it would run for fifty or sixty miles, would not be called upon at all to contribute any land to the work except that small corner of the reserve. The men who would suffer by the reservation of the land for the railway would not even communicate with the coast by the railway, as they would go to the ports of Broadsound and Mackay, not to Rockhampton; and those who were in the immediate neighborhood of the line were not disturbed. That was one absurdity in the schedule. As regarded the Kennedy Reserve, honorable members were told that the object of the railway was to open up the interior of the country. Well, the line from Townsville ran exactly south to

Charters Towers; and he could not correctly call that opening up the interior. That was a second case in which there did not seem to be any principle at all to guide the reservations or the direction of the railway. He did not, indeed, see where the line was to lead to, unless it was to turn to the westward hereafter; otherwise it would go straight into the Rockhampton Railway. But there was a still worse case, so far as regarded the opening up of the country, and that was, the proposed railway from Maryborough to Gympie. If the other railways had some sort of claim to open up some portion of the country, he could not discover what the Maryborough and Gympie Railway was going to open up;—that was wholly beyond his comprehension. It was known that the Gympie people did not want it, and that they would rather have a simple and inexpensive tramway down to Noosa. The advocates for the railway were the Maryborough people. If they got it, they would find themselves terribly sold; for he was certain that before the railway to Gympie was completed, a railway from Brisbane to Gympie would be half constructed. If the Maryborough Railway was once started, it would not finish at Gympie, it would come down to Brisbane. To his mind that would be a waste of the powers of the country in constructing public works. Here was a proposal to construct a railway that was never more than twenty miles from the sea-coast. A line from Noosa to Gympie would carry all the traffic for years to come, and it could be made at a trifling expense. The line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry might, or might not, be advisable; he did not know enough about it to say whether or not it would open up much country. But the Maryborough and Gympie Railway he would characterize as nothing but a political swindle. In committee, no doubt, there would be a good deal of discussion; and many honorable gentlemen would be prepared with amendments on the Bill. He should be prepared, whether other honorable members were or not, to amend the Bill in some respects that he had mentioned. The main thing to be looked at was that pernicious clause which had been introduced in the Assembly, and which extended the conditional purchase system to the railway reserves.

The Hon. H. G. SANDEMAN: Hear, hear.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: The principle on which he understood the Bill was introduced was that of the Western Railway Act, that the land was to be sold by auction at the best price for the purpose of getting money for the construction of the railways. If the conditional purchase system was introduced, the Government would get very little money out of the lands.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: Hear, hear.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: The Western Railway Reserve was the first that had been started; and it was on a certain defined prin-

ciple; and he thought the Council could not, at present, do better than stick as closely to it as possible. If hereafter it should have to be altered, let it be done; but the House should not be starting several lines upon no principle whatever before they saw that the principle adopted in the first instance was unreliable. He regarded it as most pernicious to introduce conditional selection into the railway reserves, because they would not be effectual in raising money for railway construction.

The Hon. T. B. STEPHENS said he should be glad to see the Bill pass in its present form, for it embodied two excellent principles. The first was, to set apart certain lands, that, when they were alienated, the entire proceeds should be spent in the construction of railways—that was, the railways proposed in the various districts were to be constructed by the proceeds of land sales or selections instead of by borrowed money entirely. He was quite satisfied that that principle would be found to work well. The second principle, which he should like to see adopted, was equally good—that, when the lands were opened for sale, they should be alienated by auction or by conditional selection. He looked upon the introduction of the latter provision as the most valuable part of the Bill; because it would encourage and promote settlement in districts where a large area of land would be taken up by selection. If auction alone was adopted as the mode of alienating land, every one knew what the effect would be. Honorable members knew by experience that when large tracts of land were put up by auction at an upset price, they were purchased by the squatter on whose run they were situated. He was not going to say that the squatters had what was called a "knock out"; but such was the state of the case, and such it would be again. And, under such a system, the railway reserves would be shut up from settlement. Open the lands to selection, and it would not be long before a very considerable population was settled on them—a population such as did not exist in this country at the present time. It was all nonsense to say that it was not as good for the object of the Bill, to get the ten shillings an acre in instalments extending over ten years, as it was to get cash down. A small quantity of land would be put up to auction, from which a lump sum would be got, cash down; but large quantities would be selected on conditions from which a regular income would be received in portions extending over a long period. He was quite satisfied that as large an income would be obtained from conditional selections, from the very beginning, as from auction sales. It was well known that the best country could not be taken at once, and that the greatest part of the reserves would not be sacrificed; because there was, somehow, only a certain amount of money available for the purpose of investing in land. Probably ten times the area of land would be

taken up by selection under conditions that would be purchased at auction; and it would be found that the annual income for the construction of railways under the Bill would be quite as satisfactory as if it had remained in its original shape. He had not examined it very carefully, but he thought that an amendment was required and was necessary in the seventh clause, to the effect that the upset price of land should not be less than ten shillings an acre. The Bill was an excellent measure under which railways could be constructed without involving the country in debt. As the main object for which the legislature held the lands in trust for the people was to promote settlement as much as possible, that object would be forwarded by railway extension; and, as railways must have traffic, it was a necessary accompaniment that the lands should be open for settlement by being occupied by the people. In that way the seventh clause would operate most beneficially by affording facilities for settlement. Therefore he urged its adoption on the Council. Of course, if it was the sole duty of honorable members to protect the interests of the existing leaseholders, they would reject the clause and sell all land at auction. He hoped, however, that they would see it would be injudicious to put such an enormous block in the way of settlement as they would by altering this clause. The Bill, as it stood, should have his support.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN said that the object for which the Bill was introduced by the Government was clearly laid down in the preamble:—

“Whereas it is expedient that provisions 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.”

It was, perhaps, an idea which could be effectually carried out as was originally intended; which was the sale of land by auction only for the purpose of raising funds for the construction of railways. There were four reserves in which the Government proposed to construct railways; but whether all of them were necessary was for the Chamber to consider. The Bill, as sent up from the Legislative Assembly, compared with the one originally introduced by the Government, contained an amendment which made the measure foreign to the intention with which it had been brought before Parliament, and on a point that was inadmissible and unwise. As honorable gentlemen must suppose that the measure had received great consideration from the Government, it was for them to assist the Government in bringing it back to its original shape; and he thought their so doing would be acceptable to the representative of the Government. There appeared to be a few other clauses in the Bill which required amendment. It might be a question for the House, whether it was wise of the Government to undertake such large

works as the construction of all the railways proposed. The Postmaster-General, in his address, stated that the affairs of the colony were never so prosperous as at present. They had been equally prosperous in the past. But days of darkness were in store for the colony. There was a serious depression just now in the price of wool, and there was slight hope of immediate improvement. That might be considered a squatter's question; but yet it was a very important one, for it affected the interests of the whole community which were mixed up with pastoral pursuits. Though it was a fine season in some parts of Queensland, yet there was a drought in New South Wales, and many pastoral tenants in both colonies were suffering from the want of rain and grass. There was also the question of the position of affairs in Europe to be taken into consideration. If war should break out, we could not expect to escape disaster. All were aware also that serious losses had occurred in the northern and western portions of the colony from drought and the ravages of the marsupials. He recently met some gentlemen from the North who had expended large sums of money in the improvement of their runs, expecting to be recouped very materially for the outlay, if allowed a reasonable period of occupation. He might point out, too, the absolute necessity of enclosing runs, which cost £100 per mile at the least; and when honorable members recollected that a large area of useless ground covered with scrub had to be enclosed, they would realise the difficulties of the pastoral lessees. The capitalist should not be lost sight of. Within a few days he had received a letter from an active bank director, pointing out that the passage of the Bill as it stood would intimidate capitalists from advancing money on pastoral properties. He merely mentioned the circumstance, because it implied a good deal. The Postmaster-General informed the House what amount of money was required to carry out the railway works. He (Mr. Brown) did not believe that the amount would be realised from the sale of the lands in the reserves. Ten shillings an acre was a very large sum to be paid for moderately good country in large areas for pastoral pursuits; and he doubted very much whether the Government would be able to find purchasers to the extent contemplated by the Bill. The theory was an admirable one, but in practice it would fail. The only way he could approve of the measure would be somewhat as follows:—Reserve lands for the railways; borrow money for their construction; and, after the expenditure, realise capital by the sale of land which would be greatly enhanced in value by the existence of the railways. That might in some measure delay settlement, but he considered that by holding the lands for, say, five years, they would have increased four or five times in value. In the event of not obtaining sufficient proceeds from the land the

country would have to look forward to additional taxation, although this colony at the present time was the heaviest taxed of all the colonies.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: Next to New Zealand.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: Excepting New Zealand, which should set as a warning to Queensland; yet heavier taxation would follow from borrowing money to carry on railway construction if the land fund failed. That, he thought, would be most disastrous. The entering into five railways now was an imprudent course, reminding him of Mr. Vogel's undertakings in New Zealand. Would it not be wiser to push on and complete one or two lines in the same time, rather than commence five, which were to start from different points, with no prospect of income for many years? He was astonished that honorable gentlemen who had proposed such a large expenditure had not given that point their consideration. It would be better if the Council could have the plans of the railway routes laid on the table at this moment; although the areas of the reserves were described in the Bill and on the maps, yet they were not definite or satisfactory. But he did not blame the Postmaster-General for that, as it was not his fault. He perceived that the Wide Bay and Burnett Reserve had been very seriously enlarged. If he were a lessee in that district, he should not at all object to it. He should prefer to be within the reserve, as he thought the tenure was better.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: He should be prepared to move an amendment in the Bill as an alteration of the amendment which had been made by the other Chamber before it came up to the Council, with the object of reducing the area. Otherwise, as he saw, the residents of Wide Bay and Burnett would be excluded entirely from the advantages of conditional selection. That was a point that honorable members of the Council would not wish to allow; and he should not. Acquainted as he was with the districts of Wide Bay and Burnett, he referred to them more particularly than to the others, and he said he thought it would be necessary when the resumptions in the Settled Districts were brought forward, to call attention to the pressing necessity that existed for extending Schedule B. That imaginary line which was drawn in 1868 between the Settled and the Unsettled Districts excluded from selection and conditional purchase some of the most valuable lands in the country. He knew of many persons who were anxious to select on some of those runs, which were more valuable for agricultural purposes than many runs already resumed; and yet those runs remained intact. When he pointed out the desire that existed to select that country, he was satisfied that the Postmaster-General would see that those runs should be thrown

open to immediate selection. With reference to the Stanthorpe Railway, a very prudent consideration was advanced the other day, that it would be better to postpone it for a time, until the Government knew to what part of the Border the New South Wales line would be extended. The Honorable Mr. Taylor had said that the land from Warwick to the Border was not valuable for agriculture, that it was a barren country; and he (Mr. Brown) was of opinion that the line should be taken to the westward, through country suitable for settlement, and with an easier gradient. He did not know if the Council would have to wait until it knew whether the Stanthorpe Railway was approved of by the other Chamber; but when the time came, he should take the opportunity of directing attention to that matter, to ascertain if there was any probability of a deviation. In speaking of the Maryborough and Gympie line, the Honorable Captain Simpson stated that he regarded its construction as unwise, because the Gympie people preferred connection with Noosa; and that probably before the line from Maryborough to Gympie was constructed there would be a railway from Brisbane to Gympie. He did not imagine from the spirit in which the Postmaster-General introduced it, that the honorable gentleman would advocate taking the traffic from its genuine port, Maryborough; but the railway was an act of justice to the Wide Bay and Burnett districts, to which the colony owed a debt of gratitude; and, further, it should be supported because it went through what was in a measure very fine country, contrasting it with the western land, than which, as it was described to him, there was no more barren land. The work was one which would be appreciated by the Wide Bay and Burnett people, and he should be very glad to see it carried out. It would have been better for the country if the Western Railway had been carried out as proposed, and the Parliament and the country had experience of it. They were, however, still in the dark as to the result of the principle that the railway could be paid for out of the proceeds of the land. He understood that the survey of lands was now going on in the neighborhood of Roma. He should have supposed that the first sales would take place in that portion of the reserve where the railway was almost constructed or in progress; that was, in the vicinity of Dalby. He did not wish to detain the House any longer, as other honorable gentlemen might desire to address it; but, his inclination would lead him to support an amendment that would make the Bill as it was originally framed by the Government. He recognised the principle of it then; but the Bill before the Council departed entirely from that principle, and it was what he called an abortion. When the House went into committee he should be prepared to restore the Bill to what he conceived to be its proper shape.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT said he must agree with nearly all the arguments that the Honorable Mr. Brown had advanced. The Bill before the House was certainly very different from what it was when introduced by the Government in another place. Looking at its object, to make railways with funds received from the sale of lands, he could not see how that was to be realised by making the reserves subject to conditional selection. There would be some probability of raising sufficient funds from sales by auction under the provisions of the Bill as first presented to the Assembly. He was rather surprised at the remarks of the Honorable Mr. Stephens, whom he had believed to be a business man, and a man of sound reasoning powers, as having held a leading position in the politics of the colony. That honorable gentleman stated that the colony would not lose—he could not state his exact words but the meaning of them—by allowing the land included in the railway reserves to be selected on conditional purchase, instead of being sold by auction exclusively, though sold at the same price. Well, he (Mr. Lambert) had taken the trouble to run up a few figures, which proved a different result:—Say, 2,000 acres of land were sold outright on the 1st January, 1877, at ten shillings an acre. On the date given, the Crown would receive £1,000. That sum, which was worth to the Government five per cent., the accumulation of ten years' compound interest would increase to £1,621 17s., on 1st January, 1887. A conditional selector, say, took up 2,000 acres of land on the 1st January, 1877; and his rent would be £100 per annum. At the end of ten years, the colony would have from the transaction £1,320 6s., that was, on the 1st January, 1887;—showing a loss of £311 11s. on the sale of the land, or at the rate of three shillings and three half-pence per acre, from allowing the land to go by conditional selection.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT: If the Government were to make railways by the sale of land, those figures should be quite enough to blot out conditional selection from the Bill. He did not wish to detain the House by speaking to anything but the broad principle of the Bill, where he saw it was defective. In committee, he hoped it would receive certain improvements. For the sake of the country at large, he wished to see it properly carried out. He had not the slightest personal interest in it.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER said that on such an important subject honorable members talked a great deal. Principle was what everyone said something about. To him it seemed that what was principle one session, was not principle in the next. His experience of the Parliament, since his membership began in the Council, was, that principles were established every year and were given up the next year. He could only say that, if it was

admitted that the land was to be parted with from the Crown, the principle of selling land to make railways was certainly a very sound one. But, then, everything depended on the selling of the land. On various occasions he had stated that he was entirely opposed to the squandering of the capital of the State, by selling the land; he believed in leasing, not selling. But, of course, it would be very hard to get out of the groove that the colony was in from the beginning; however much it might be proved that by a good and improved system of leasing Queensland would become a very rich country. It appeared that we had no very great statesman who was able to grapple with the question at present; but, perhaps, after years of trouble, some one might be found, who, with great sacrifice, would recover what the community had lost and was losing. With regard to selling the land, however, to which he must confine himself, he confessed that he fully agreed with the Honorable Mr. Brown, who had taken the words out of his mouth, that it would be far better to borrow money to make the railways before parting with the land, than to sell the land before completing the railways. Money could be got in the English market at four and a-half per cent. He would augment the honorable gentleman's remarks so far as to say that he would set the land apart to repay the expenditure on the works, from year to year. In a very short time, as had been seen in the Settled Districts—Darling Downs, for instance—the land would grow in value, and he was very sure the Government would have an immense capital by-and-bye to deal with and to set the railways free. As had been properly remarked, this was a very highly-taxed colony—the heaviest taxed of all the colonies except New Zealand—and he was afraid that the people would be taxed more if the legislature was not very careful. The colony needed many more inhabitants, and they must be got, if possible. As to the occupation of the land, if it was all under homesteads, the State would soon lose its capital; while he thought that perpetual rents coming in would be quite equal to profits on railways exchanged for the land. However, he must give in to the idea that reserves should be made distinctly for the construction of railways where they were required, which should be in districts that were really fit for settlement. He could not quite agree with what the Honorable Mr. Brown had said about Queensland taking warning by New Zealand. That colony had very little fertile land, and it was very mountainous, as compared to this colony. New Zealand had one climate; Queensland had another. It might be a little hot here in the low-lying country, but the climate of Darling Downs was very fine. And he could not refrain from saying that Queensland had not alone the best soil, but the best climate, too, as compared with New Zealand. Wheat-growing in Queensland showed an average of twenty-three bushels

to the acre; while in South Australia the average was nine or ten bushels. From personal inspection a few weeks ago, he could say that he never saw wheat-fields, even in the old country, better than those he saw on the Downs; and he had been credibly informed that Darling Downs had by no means the best soil of the colony. The testimony of Mr. Clark, who had been a member of the legislature, was to the effect that the Queensland soil was the best he had seen in all Australia; and that gentleman was a very good judge. As to allowing the selection of land in the reserves, or selling it by auction, he (Mr. Heussler) had not made up his mind which way he should vote; but perhaps he should be able to judge in committee, after hearing further argument.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said that preceding speakers had so fully discussed the leading features, and gone so fully into the details of the Bill, that he should only tend to protract the discussion without any beneficial results if he did more than draw the attention of the House to a few salient points which, though not lost sight of hitherto in the debate, should still be kept prominently before honorable members. In the first place, it would be remembered that the introduction of the Western Railway Reserves Bill was with a view of testing the principle whether the sale of Crown lands for the construction of railways would be found to answer; and that at the time he expressed his opinion strongly in favor of all public works being constructed entirely from the public estate; at any rate, while the colony was in its infancy and a large amount of capital was required to develop its great resources.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: Hear, hear.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: The experiment, Parliament was told, was to be tested by the Western Railway Act; or, rather, that measure was to be the test of the principle. Twelve months had elapsed and the work was barely commenced; it was only a few months since that the extension from Dalby towards Roma was begun, and the test was not yet applied. From this stand-point he would speak: first, as to the possibility of the system sought to be based on that principle answering the expectations of those who introduced it. On a former occasion he pointed out most emphatically, and he felt assured he carried with him the convictions of the House, that the land would never pay the cost of construction: the utmost that the lands would do, would be to pay the interest on the debt incurred.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: Not even that.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: Consequently, honorable members had to look into the matter now, and ask themselves whether it would be wise to follow out that principle? He should at once say that, so far from believing that the principle was a wise one, he would use his strongest efforts to have the

Bill thrown out, were it not that he considered it was quite possible for the Council to make the reserves answer for the construction of the railways. Otherwise, he would not do what he intended to do, vote for the second reading of the Bill. He did not wish to be considered an alarmist; for he had as strong faith in the future of Queensland as any sound-thinking man could have. He believed that its immense resources, if judiciously managed—if we were willing to progress steadily—we should not hold back, nor should we proceed rashly—would enable the colony not only to maintain its present position, but to bid fair to stand at the head of the Australian colonies. There must be no dealing blindly with the public estate; no damaging of any interest without the fullest compensation. He should run over a few statistics which bore upon the view he wished to express. At the present time, this colony expended something like £600,000 a-year in the construction of railways. By the end of this year, the interest payable on the indebtedness of the colony for the construction of public works would be very nearly equal to the whole revenue derivable from the lands of the colony, from every source, including even pastoral rents. It might be advanced as a set-off against that absorbing debt, that there were proceeds from the railway itself; that its revenue would go some way towards meeting the debt. That he was perfectly willing to recognise, and to admit that the railway returns were steadily increasing. It might be hoped that the day would arrive when from the older lines the returns would be adequate to pay a considerable portion of the interest upon the outlay for their construction. Still it must not be forgotten that the railways had been in operation only a few years, and that in a period of fifteen or twenty years from their completion many of the works, according to their character, would have to be entirely renewed; such as wooden bridges on the lines between this and Dalby and Warwick. That would be a very serious drain upon the revenue. Consequently, honorable members must anticipate that there would be a further demand on the public purse, besides the cost of construction and the cost of ordinary maintenance. To show how very much the Government of the day were either mistaken or shut their eyes wilfully to the real state of the question in connection with the Dalby and Roma Railway, he should just draw attention to statements made at the time it was first proposed to enter into that undertaking. It was then announced that the line would be constructed for £400,000; and some persons said it would be constructed for even a lower sum; but the figures given were generally accepted. He recollected quite well saying at the time, that he had an absolute conviction that nothing short of £900,000 would complete it. At the end of twelve months it was acknowledged generally that

the line would cost £800,000. Yet he was almost laughed at for his opinions at the time. He was satisfied the railway would probably cost a round million sterling. Next came the question—Ought the large reserves to be made? They were ostensibly to meet the cost of the construction of the railways; but they were accompanied by the avowed intention that money must be borrowed for commencing the works. The supposition that the lands would ultimately meet the cost of the construction of the railways he affirmed to be hopeless. He did not say this with the intention or wish to lead to the relinquishment of the construction of fresh railways, but, that honorable members should bear it in mind, as a check upon whatever was undertaken, that the Parliament should not go beyond the amount which the country could reasonably afford to repay of borrowed capital—viewing the land revenue only as in a small degree supplementary in providing for the ultimate cost, only equal, probably, to paying interest on the debt. A few statistics had been furnished in another place by a gentleman who had a large knowledge of the subject, and they were reliable. They bore upon the question of the Stanthorpe extension, which he alluded to more especially as he felt better qualified to give an opinion upon it than upon any of the other lines named, which he should leave to honorable gentlemen who knew more of them than he did. On looking over the returns of revenue derivable for the Warwick Railway, he found the following particulars:—In 1871, before the tin discoveries, about £8,500 was returned. In 1872, during which the tin discoveries were made, the revenue rose to £16,000. In 1873, it was £19,000. In 1874, it receded to £18,000. In 1875, there was a still further recession to £17,800; and it was still further progressing at the present time. Now, although he did not believe the retrogression would continue very much longer, yet it was proof that a part of the increase was due to the excessive amount of traffic which resulted from goods going up, as well as to the returns of tin going down for export. That traffic would go on for some years; but the chances were, that it would diminish, and in a greater ratio than the sources of other revenue, such as wool and grain, would increase, and take the place of the present mineral production. He should hope that other things would turn up to keep the line in a tolerably fair advancing condition, as shown by its revenue. The copper and coal mines of the district might be developed, as a greater demand for the produce sprang up in various ways. He would trust that the line would gradually become nearer and nearer a paying line. Now, he wished to bring what he was saying to bear upon the proposed extension to Stanthorpe and the Border. Assuming that the railway was taken, in the first instance, to Stanthorpe only, the extension was about

forty-one miles; it would not cost less, at the very lowest estimate, than £6,000 per mile. Indeed, it was most likely, when the engineers absolutely commenced work upon it, as was usually the case, to cost £7,000 or £8,000 per mile. He could not see how it could be constructed for less: it would trench very closely upon half-a-million, especially when rolling-stock was added, with various other matters. Although he was by no means urging this argument as condemnatory of that line, yet he advanced it to show that the Council must tread cautiously, that honorable members must look before they leaped, or the colony would be found in the position of having borrowed a sum of money to commence the construction of a number of public works, and found, at a future period, should there be any serious depression in the money market, that they could not be proceeded with to completion; in fact, in the same position as Queensland was placed in during 1866-7, when a number of laborers on the public works did not receive their wages, while their families were starving—when bodies of men were in a state of open rebellion, as he might term it, against the Ministry of the day. That unfortunate state of things honorable gentlemen should not undertake to encourage: to bring a large body of workmen to the colony to be engaged on five or six different public works, and, when the necessities of the position of the colony demanded it, to discharge them, leaving them at liberty to depart from the colony discontented, because they could not find, in a period of depression, employment in the colony. The whole trend of his argument was simply that, while he saw no objection to the reservation of areas of land for the purpose of railway construction, it should be borne in mind that the reserves, as he before affirmed, would only pay the interest on the debt to be incurred for the carrying out of the works. In reality, it was a matter of doubt whether the lands would do even that. Parliament must, therefore, go into the undertaking, if the Bill should become law, with the thorough conviction that the country must pay for railway construction out of borrowed capital.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: Hear, hear.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY: He should now only add, that in looking at the amount of land that could be sold annually, judging from the previous history of the colony, from his knowledge of its financial condition, of its residents, of the banking system—he could not say reasonably that, under the most favorable circumstances, a greater sum would be realised than £200,000 per annum from the sale of land. If the Bill should be carried in its integrity, that sum would have to be distributed over from four or five different lines of railway; and, in reality, it would be but a drop in the bucket. That some of the railways should be undertaken he fully agreed in. He believed that they

should be undertaken, as this colony ought not to lag behind the other colonies, but keep up the railway system on something like a similar footing to theirs; and because it would result to the advantage of Queensland, if prudently undertaken and kept within reasonable bounds. When the Bill was in committee, there were some amendments which would be made to bring it into the form that the country demanded.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN said he should not detain the House, after all that had been said on the Bill; but he should like on such an important subject to offer a few words. He must enter his protest against the principle of the Bill, which was wrong; and the measure was wrong financially. He believed that if the colony had not entered upon a crisis, it was on the verge of one; and that this was the wrong time to introduce a measure which involved not only in the future, but within a very short period, most important issues. As to raising money for the construction of the proposed railways, he believed that the project of the Government was utterly unreliable. It could not be expected that there would be realised from the disposal of the lands which it was proposed to reserve anything like the amount required for the construction of the railways projected; and, therefore, it would come to this—Queensland must enter the money market and borrow largely. He asked any honorable gentleman in the Council, or any honorable member of the legislature, if the Parliament was justified, in the present state of the country, in going into an enormous amount of debt which the proposed railway scheme must involve? But apart from his objection to the principle of the Bill, he asked, why its intention should not be carried out consistently with the objects with which it was introduced? The Government departed entirely from those objects, and from principle, by admitting a mode of alienation of land under the Bill which never could give them a revenue for carrying into effect the objects contemplated by them. As far as he could understand the Minister for Lands, who introduced the Bill to Parliament, the avowed objects of the Bill were—first, the proclamation of all lands benefited by projected or authorised railways as railway reserves, such railway reserves being saleable only for purposes of railway construction, all funds derivable from such source to form a trust fund for the construction of such railway lands; second, the settlement of a population along the proposed railway lines; and, third, obtaining as much for the lands in the railway reserves as possible. Now, how were those objects to be given effect to? How were the propositions of the Government to be carried out under the Bill? In the first place, all lands benefited were not proclaimed reserves. Reserves were chosen beyond the benefit of the proposed lines. In the Southern Extension Railway

Reserve, the only saleable lands were the Tummalville, North Branch, Yandilla, and Macintyre Brook lands, which were in the opposite direction to, and widely apart from the proposed Stanthorpe Railway, and which were not benefited by the line; and, therefore, the funds obtainable by the sale of such lands would be taken away from the public creditor for a purpose contrary to the avowed objects of the Bill. In the Wide Bay and Burnett District Reserve, all lands were included, with a settled district hitherto alienated under the Act of 1868, the funds for which were set apart and ought to go towards the payment of the interest on the public debt, and for public works other than railways. In the Central District Reserve, the Government had gone beyond the requirements of the Bill by reserving country two or three years, according to their own statement, before it was likely to be required. And as for such an argument for settlement alongside the railway, they were taking the line completely away from the land; and the schedule and the map showed that they had omitted to reserve land along the line towards the Comet, thus leaving a strip of unreserved land in the unsettled districts of fifty miles in length alongside the Northern Railway. Where was the consistency of their action with the second proposition laid down, that the settlement of population along the railways was one of the great objects of the Bill. There was the reserve, which any honorable member could look at on the map, and which was removed entirely from the line of railway proposed to be ultimately carried out. Therefore the advantage which the country was supposed to derive from giving effect to the objects of the Bill did not appear in that instance. He might also state that supposing the line was not made according to the proposal which would most probably be carried out, namely, from Emerald Downs, not to Clermont, but in a south-westerly direction; there was no land resumed there; and, again, the policy of the Government would not be carried out as proposed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he was sorry to interrupt the honorable member; but he stated distinctly that it was the policy of the Government to go from Emerald Downs to Clermont.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: The honorable gentleman could not say positively that that would be the line of railway.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He said, that was the policy of the Government.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN: But that did not at all settle the question, whether that would be the line or not. Therefore, he put it to the Postmaster-General whether it was right to adhere to that reserve under the circumstances? Then, again, with regard to the mode of raising the money. He had said that one of the proposals of the Government was to set apart lands for the purpose of railway construc-

tion; the proceeds derived from that source to form a trust fund therefor. That was a principle which they contended justified auction sales. But, now, the Bill came before the Council with an amendment allowing the introduction of conditional selection within the reserves; and herein the Government had departed from the third avowed object of the Bill, to obtain the highest price possible in cash for the lands. It could not be expected that an income would be derived from the sale of land, under deferred payments; little or none of the proceeds of the land would be available for the railways, and then only in dribblets; and the Government would be forced to return to the loan system advocated by the Opposition in another place, a departure from which he trusted would be deprecated by the Council, as it was contrary to the principle and objects of the Bill. It was quite out of the question — it was quite beyond the principle on which the Bill was framed, to admit of that mode of disposing of the land. The Government said that to get money for the railways was the object of the Bill. Then, why not hold to the principle on which they first started? It was no use attempting to throw the Bill out; but he, for one, should certainly protest against its operation. It would be of very serious detriment to the country, if carried out as it was now framed. However, when it got into committee, he hoped sincerely that honorable members would join together in endeavoring to effect such improvements in it as would alleviate some of the great evils that he felt would otherwise result from it. He should not detain the House at a late hour by saying more on the subject. He could foresee the hardships that would be inflicted upon a certain class of men whose leases were involved in the reserves; but he did not much like to go into that question, because although not personally interested in any way in the present reserve, yet it was well known that as one of the oldest Crown lessees in the colony, he always had his own conscientious and strong views on the subject, which it was unnecessary to enlarge upon. If the Government did not seriously consider the results that would accrue to a large class of men whose interests were involved in the operation of the Bill, they would do great injustice not only to that class, but to the country at large. It was not in this colony alone, but elsewhere, that the results would be felt. He had heard from various sources beyond the colony that the action taken at present by the Government was regarded with great concern by a large number of persons outside the colony now deeply interested in Queensland; and he thought the Government ought to be extremely careful in the steps they took in reference to the subject under consideration and in which so much was involved that was of the greatest importance to the future welfare of the colony.

Question put and passed.