

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 7 AUGUST 1877**

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The MINISTER FOR INSTRUCTION (Mr. Griffith) replied—

£	s.	d.
1.—938	19	5
167	3	10

purchased  
furnished by Colonial Stores.

£1,106 3 3

	£	s.	d.
2.—Under contract ... ..	806	4	7
Open market ... ..	132	14	10
From Colonial Stores ... ..	167	3	10

£1,106 3 3

3.—The contract system is now adopted, so far as practicable, purchases being made in the open market under specific circumstances only. It is intended to follow the same practice in the future.

#### AUDITOR-GENERAL'S PENSION BILL —THIRD READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, this Bill was read a third time.

#### RAILWAY PLANS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. G. Thorn), in rising to move the resolutions of which he had given notice, said—The Railway Reserves Bill having passed this House, I have now to ask honourable members to agree to the motion standing in my name, approving the schedules of six lines of railway. In doing so, I wish to call attention to the memoranda which have been distributed amongst honourable members, and which will show the cost of each of the lines contemplated by the Government. The documents will also show the fallacy of certain statements made last session, and during the recess, to the effect that the Government do not know what these railways will cost. From the report of the Chief Engineer and the engineer in charge of railway surveys, honourable members will receive all necessary information upon this point, with one exception—namely, that of the line from the Comet to Emerald Downs. This is not included in the reports; but I may as well state at once that this line will only cost £150,000, or £5,000 a-mile, for the thirty miles. This, Sir, I believe to be the proper time, too, to contradict a statement which has received some amount of credit out of doors, and which has found its way into certain not over-scrupulous papers of the colony, with regard to the railway lines already in course of construction. It has been said that the cost of those lines will be £6,000 a-mile and over; but I can assure honourable members that they will, when completed, cost not more than £4,300 a-mile. As to the contracts entered into for the completion of the line to Dulacca, I may state that No. 1 section (twenty-eight miles) has been let to Messrs. Overend and Company at

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 7 August, 1877.

Questions.—Auditor-General's Pension Bill—third reading.—Railway Plans.—Supply—resumption of committee.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past three o'clock.

#### QUESTIONS.

Mr. BUZACOTT asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

1. What is the total cost of stationery and school requisites supplied to the Education Department during the year 1876-7?

2. What proportion was supplied under contract, and what proportion purchased in the open market?

3. Is it intended to extend the contract system to all departmental requirements?

the following rates:—Contract rate per mile, £2,999; contract amount, £83,996; permanent way and other material supplied by Government, station buildings, and engineering staff, &c., £41,770; total, £125,767; rate per mile, £1,491 13s. 9d. No. 2 section (twenty-four miles) has also been let to Messrs. Overend and Company as follows:—Contract rate per mile, £2,999 17s. 6d.; contract amount, £71,997; permanent way, &c., £31,842; total, £106,839; rate per mile, £1,451. No. 3 section (twenty-seven miles) has been let to Messrs. Bashford and Company as follows:—Contract rate per mile, £2,893 11s. 8d.; contract amount, £78,126; permanent way, &c., £38,854; total, £116,981; rate per mile, £1,332 12s. 11d. The fourth and last section (twenty-four and three-quarter miles) has been let to Fountain and Co. at the following rates:—Contract rate per mile, £2,460 14s. 5d.; contract amount, £60,902 16s. 10d.; permanent way, &c., £35,676; total, £96,579; rate per mile, £3,902. I give these figures in order to convince the House that these lines were let at a very cheap rate indeed; and if the lines proposed to be constructed by the Government are let as wisely, the country will have no cause to complain and the labour market will not be disturbed. I do not mean to say that the Government intend to go on with all the lines at once. We propose to go on with two railways immediately: the line from Warwick to Stanthorpe, and the line from Maryborough thirty-six miles towards Gympie; and we do not propose to let them in one section. The Stanthorpe line will be let in three moderate lengths; the Gympie line in two lengths. By adopting this plan the Government will get the lines made cheaper than they would otherwise have done, without in any way disarranging the labour market. The reason we ask for tenders for these two lines at once is, because the permanent surveys have been made. We now come to consider what is the contemplated cost of all the lines proposed by the Government at the present time. It is, after all, a very moderate sum to ask the House to agree to for six lines of railway. First, there is the line between Warwick and Stanthorpe. When it is completed we may safely reckon that nearly all the tin which now finds its way to Newcastle and Grafton will come upon our Southern and Western line; and not only the tin, but also a large amount of pastoral produce from the north-western part of New South Wales. I will venture to assert, that when this line is completed to Stanthorpe it will more than pay working expenses,—in fact, it will return 1 or 2 per cent. upon the outlay. The line will cost £8,553 per mile, as honourable members will observe on referring to Mr. Stanley's report. Between Warwick and the upper tunnel there

are some heavy earthworks, and large bridges will be necessary; but from that point into Stanthorpe the works are of an easy character. Notwithstanding this, however, the quantity of excavation in cuttings, side-cuttings, &c., amounts to no less than an average of 15,300 cubic yards per mile. Considerable improvement has been effected by the permanent survey in the item of works as compared with the trial sections. The earthwork has been reduced nearly 20 per cent., and the tunnels from four, of an aggregate length of 792 lineal yards, as allowed for in Mr. Smith's estimate of April, 1876, to two of 451 lineal yards. This saving is chiefly due to more favourable sections having been obtained by the several deviations, as well as to a more judicious arrangement of gradients. When these difficulties are got over, however, the remainder will be constructed much more cheaply. The line on leaving Warwick keeps to the back of the pound, crosses the Condamine in the rear of the hospital, and runs parallel with Lyons street. This route has been adopted in preference to the alternative one, which crosses the river near the present station and traverses the town, passing at the back of the post office, and between Albion and Canning streets. Although the line by the route now proposed to be adopted is fifty-three chains longer, it will be a less costly one to construct, and in other respects is much superior in an engineering point of view. This line will be forty and a-half miles in length, and the station at Stanthorpe will be in the centre of the town. There are many reasons to be urged in favour of the course we have adopted at Warwick,—amongst them I may mention that a much better site for a bridge over the Condamine is obtained, involving a less expensive structure; that the works would be less exposed to injury from flood; that the curves of gradients are more favourable; that a heavy embankment and deep cutting, required in traversing the town by the other route, is avoided, as well as the crossing of numerous streets, which would in consequence have to be raised or otherwise altered, to the inconvenience of the public traffic; that less valuable town property is passed through; and that the estimated cost is £3,300 under that of the alternative line. The second line proposed by the Government is one between Maryborough and Gympie; and with respect to it I may state that since I met the House last year I have been over the line, and have no hesitation in saying that it will be one of the best paying lines in the colony. The amount of traffic I saw on that road was very great; and it must not be forgotten that the line will connect two large towns, each of which has large suburban and country populations, while between the

towns there is a large agricultural settlement along the valley of the Mary. It is proposed to take this line from the ninety-acre reserve, in the town of Maryborough, and, following the northern bank of the Mary River, *via* Yengarie and Ramsay's saw-mills, to Antigua. Crossing the river a short distance above the sugar-mills it passes on the western side of Tiaro; thence by Gootchie and Curra stations, and following up the watershed of the right-hand branch of Curra Creek, traverses some rather broken country to the northward of Gympie, and terminates on the spur on which the court-house and principal business part of the town is situated. It was once contemplated to run a direct line from Maryborough to Gympie, and a survey was made as far as Tiaro, but no Parliamentary plans were ever prepared. It is true this "direct line," as it was called, would have been a little shorter than that we have now chosen *via* Antigua; but it would have been less serviceable, and would have cost little if any less, while it would go altogether away from the settlement. According to Mr. Stanley's report, this direct line would go from Owanyilla to a point of junction near Warren's Creek, about eleven miles fifty chains, and the ordinary cost of construction would be £58,125, or at the rate of £5,000 per mile; but there would be a bridge over the Mary River at Maryborough 1,887 feet long, which would cost £55,000. Altogether, this direct line would cost £113,125. The line which the Government proposes *via* Antigua to the point of junction is seventeen miles ten chains, and, at an average of £5,000 a-mile, will cost £85,625; and including a bridge over the Mary River at Antigua 1,030 feet long, which can be constructed at an estimated cost of £30,000, will come to £115,625—or £2,500 more than the direct line would cost. This, however, is very little, as I have shown that the Antigua line will draw a large amount of traffic to it. I may also mention that a branch to Gayndah will start some day from this Antigua line, and a branch will also go from it to the Burrum, which are reasons why it should be adopted. There is also a proposition to have an alternative line, which is known as the Bailey's Falls deviation, and which is sixty-one chains longer than that *via* Antigua, and, according to the report of the engineer, would cost considerably more than that line. At the same time, the line *via* Antigua will, I believe, accommodate the greatest number of settlers and return the largest traffic, whilst it will cost only £5,127 a-mile, or a total of £320,478. The third line which the Government ask the sanction of the House to is one from Bundaberg to Mount Perry. This line, which will start from the north side of Bundaberg, the Govern-

ment propose to construct at a very cheap rate; it is, in fact, to be one of the low-cost railways contemplated by the Government. It is not intended to reduce the gauge on it, but allow it to remain at three feet six inches, with a view of ultimately, if there is a large amount of traffic, converting it into a first class line. I may state that at present, although the Mount Perry mines are closed, the miners are prepared to work those mines when the railway is constructed, and pay the proprietors a large percentage. I may state that this line passes through rich land as far as Washey Creek, the first part being rich scrub and the rest good forest, well adapted for agriculture; and that when the line reaches Mount Perry it will reach a large population, and will enable them to have a cheap means of getting their produce to market. Some honourable members may be of opinion that this line will not return the same interest of money as the longer lines; but that is no reason why we should not go on with this line, as it has been discovered in other colonies that lines not thought much of at first have proved to be the best paying afterwards. I have very little doubt myself that this line will prove one of the best paying lines in the colony. Honourable members will also see that this line to New Moonta, including everything, such as stations and maintenance, will only cost £3,050 a-mile, thus making it the cheapest line constructed in the colonies; and when we consider that in the last five miles there is a tunnel 330 feet in length, I think it will not be said that the sum I have mentioned is a very large amount. That line, as I have said before, will cost £150,983, or at the rate of £3,050 a-mile. The next line the Government proposes to submit for the approval of the House is one from the Comet to Emerald Downs. This line is about thirty miles in length, and, according to Mr. Ballard's estimate, will cost £5,000 a-mile, or a total of £150,000. With the exception of three bridges, the country is almost level; and I may state for the information of honourable members representing the Central division, that the Government are taking action already with regard to these bridges, in order to hasten on as fast as possible the line in the great Central and Western districts. The next line we propose is a line from Dulacca to Roma, which is nearly sixty-two miles in length, and passes through comparatively easy country; not so easy, however, as that between Dalby and Dulacca, and consequently it will cost about £300 a-mile more than from Dalby to Dulacca; but notwithstanding this the whole line will not cost more than £4,300 a-mile. Another reason why this extension will cost more than the line from Dalby to Dulacca is,

that there are two very extensive bridges. When finished, however, this line will be the means of drawing to the Southern and Western Railway a large amount of traffic which now finds its way to New South Wales. The next line we propose to ask the sanction of the House to is from Townsville to Charters Towers; and I have laid on the table plans showing the first fifty miles of it. Were it not a fact that very expensive bridges will have to be constructed over creeks, or rather, I should say, rivers, this line would be constructed at a very cheap rate. The Government, I may say, contemplate making this a first class line, as Charters Towers will be eventually made the depôt for a large traffic from the Diamantina, Upper Barcoo, and other great pastoral districts. Altogether, the proposition of the Government is, I think, a very moderate one. If the House sees fit to approve of the plans the Government do not intend to proceed with the construction of the railways simultaneously, as they think that it would probably cause some disturbance of the labour market. I think I can safely venture to assert that the lines will be let under the amounts put down in the Estimates, and let as wisely as the extensions from Dalby to Dullacca. I now beg to move, Sir—

1. That this House approves of the plans, sections, and book of reference of the extension of the railway from Warwick to Stanthorpe, laid upon the table of this House.

2. That this House approves of the plans, sections, and book of reference of the railway from Maryborough to Gympie, laid upon the table of this House.

3. That this House approves of the plans, sections, and book of reference of the railway from Bundaberg towards Mount Perry, laid upon the table of this House.

4. That this House approves of the plans, sections, and book of reference of the extension of the railway from Comet to Emerald Downs, laid upon the table of this House.

5. That this House approves of the plans, sections, and book of reference of the extension of the railway from Dulacca to Roma, laid upon the table of this House.

6. That this House approves of the plans, sections, and book of reference of the railway from Townsville towards Charters Towers, laid upon the table of this House.

7. That the said several plans, sections, and books of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form.

Mr. PALMER: I have been waiting, Sir, for the contingent notice of motion which was to have been brought forward by the honourable member for Bulimba on the resolutions now before us; but as it appears that that honourable member has been spirited away from the House in some extraordinary manner, I presume that I may as well rise to make the few remarks I intended to address to the House. I take

it, that that contingent motion cannot be brought on at a later period of the debate; if it can, I have no intention of debating the resolutions until that is done.

The SPEAKER: The only time a contingent notice of motion can be moved is immediately after the main question has been put from the chair.

Mr. PALMER: Well, Sir, we have heard a very elaborate speech from the Minister for Works on these proposed railways. The subject has been so often debated in the House that I do not see much use in discussing the same things over and over again; but I must say that the manner in which the engineers' report, referred to by the honourable gentleman in his speech, was put into the hands of honourable members was, to say the least of it, very extraordinary. If we are to be expected, in the short space of five minutes, to make ourselves acquainted with engineers' reports, which might have been put into our hands several days ago, I say it is too much for any Government to expect of us, and that it is evident that the Government do not intend to let honourable members make themselves acquainted with what the opinions of their engineers really are. I charge the Government with wilfully and deliberately keeping members of this House as much as possible in the dark on this subject. We have been favoured by the Minister for Works with his opinions as to how these lines will pay; but I can only say that I would not give three farthings of the very worst copper ever coined for that gentleman's opinion. It was his clear duty to have shown the House how he arrived at the conclusion that these lines will pay interest on the cost of construction; but, instead of that, he has only given us the Honourable George Thorn's opinions, on which I for one place very little value. The honourable gentleman also told us that the Government do not intend to proceed with the construction of these six lines simultaneously. Now, Sir, I have warned the House over and over again that they never intended to go on with them all at once; but that they merely intended to go on with their pet lines—notably the one from Maryborough to Gympie—and let the others slide. I think the action of the Government will fully justify me now in having always stated that belief. We are told that they are not going to disturb the labour market by proceeding with all the lines simultaneously; yet, although they have been told over and over again by this side of the House that such would be the effect, they have only just arrived at the conclusion not to proceed with all the lines at once. The honourable gentleman has forgotten, however, that, besides the lines he has enumerated to the House, there are at least four more promised by the

honourable gentleman at the head of the Government; and I suppose the parties who brought the pressure upon that honourable gentleman necessary to get those lines will hardly be contented with the promise that at some future time they will be proceeded with. Instead of a line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry we find that the Minister for Works proposes to stop at New Moonta, and wishes us to believe that that short piece of railway will be a very paying line. He does not show how it will pay, whilst we have before us a notorious example, in the line from Rockhampton to Westwood, that short lines will not pay—with, however, the difference in favour of the Westwood line, that it had an immense amount of back country traffic to feed it. In spite of that, the fact stares us in the face, that whilst that line was a short one it did not pay for the greasing of the wheels. Notwithstanding this bitter experience, which runs over a series of years, the honourable gentleman tries to persuade us that the short line from Bundaberg—where there is no back country to support it—will be a paying line. If honourable members can swallow that, I envy them their gullibility. Notwithstanding that the Government say that they do not intend to proceed with these lines simultaneously, I believe that the same pressure as before will be brought to bear upon them, and that we shall have the same melancholy spectacle of a Government submitting to any amount of squeezing in order to retain office, although we know perfectly well that they will be unable to carry out their promises. Up to the present time we were told that the Government intended to proceed with all the lines simultaneously; but now we learn what will amount to many of those lines being indefinitely shelved. As I have frequently said before, the Opposition have done all in their power to prevent the Government carrying out what will, I do not hesitate to say, be a most ruinous policy in regard to the construction of railways,—I refer to their Railway Reserves Bill and to these resolutions. They have been told that the state of the labour market will prevent these multitudinous schemes being carried out; and it must also be remembered that there are in the background promises of other lines of railway. There is one from Ipswich to Fassifern; from Ipswich to the Logan; and probably one from Brisbane to Sandgate—that is, in fact, I believe, now being surveyed; then there are rumours of one from Oxley to South Brisbane, another to the Government wharves, another to the Queen's Wharf, and others,—all of which will cost an enormous amount of money and will absorb an immense amount of labour. Yet we are to believe that the Government are in earnest with all these lines. I say that it is simply impossible,

and no one knows that better than the members of the Government themselves. I am quite certain that the Premier, if he chooses to reply to me, instead of deputing one of his supporters to do so as he did last night, will say that I am adopting the course of obstruction usual to honourable members on this side of the House whenever any railways are proposed; but the reverse is the case, as the Opposition have always advocated railway construction. When the present Ministry took office they plainly told their constituents that they were not in favour of making railways until the country was in a more prosperous financial condition. That was what they did, with the exception of the present Colonial Secretary, who was not then in office. I say again, Sir, that the Opposition have all along been in favour of the construction of railways—of the construction of main trunk lines through the colony. I say that the present Ministry stole that policy from the Opposition; they found that their “rest and caution” policy was not at all in accordance with the opinions of the country, and feeling their way by testing the opinions of honourable members of this House and of the people out of doors, they trimmed their sails accordingly. Instead, however, of adopting what I may call the sensible policy of the Opposition, they rushed, as all converts do, to the extreme, and have had, through their own conduct, a scheme forced upon them which no Government can possibly carry out;—and they know it. If they had proposed a feasible scheme of railway construction, to be carried on steadily, and had not rushed one railway on another—piling Pelion on Ossa—until honourable members were sick of railways, they would have had the support of the Opposition; but we cannot consent to their scheme as it is, as we feel that it will be ruinous to the country. I may remark, that I am speaking the feelings of the entire Opposition when I say that we have done all we could to prevent this suicidal policy. Honourable members on this side of the House showed by their speeches last session, and by their votes and speeches during the last three years, that they cannot support any such scheme as that now proposed; but they feel that the Government have hitherto commanded a majority in this House, and, much as they feel that the course the Ministry are pursuing is radically wrong, they do not care to offer any obstruction. They will not assist the Government in any way, but will leave the whole responsibility of carrying out the policy on the shoulders of the men who introduced it. That it will be injurious to the country I have not the least doubt. But if any faint hope lingers in the breast of the honourable Premier that

he will, by causing a division in the camp of the Opposition, be able to carry out the same tactics that he did last session, and have these resolutions so altered in another place that he may go on dangling these lines of railway before the eyes of his supporters for another twelve months, he is very much mistaken. As far as the Minister for Works is concerned, he can carry his resolutions and make the best of them.

The PREMIER: I am always very happy to follow the honourable gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, and I regret that he should feel hurt because I did not address myself to the House yesterday immediately after he sat down. The fact was, I had not taken nearly so prominent a part in the discussion of that question on previous occasions, nor did I feel such interest in it as many other honourable members did; and I did not rise, not from any desire to give a slight to the honourable gentleman—if he considers it a slight—but from a sincere feeling that I did not take an interest in the subject to the extent that many other honourable gentlemen did; and I beg to apologize to him if he thinks that, in any way, I failed to act up to my position in not immediately rising to reply. I congratulate the honourable gentleman that he has at last taken up a position which is a proper one under the circumstances. The Opposition have availed themselves of every opportunity of expressing their dislike to the policy which we have done our best to expound. The honourable gentleman now announces, as the unanimous expression of opinion on the part of the Opposition, that they are no longer prepared to offer any obstruction to the passing of this measure; that having done what they conceive to be their duty, they will now throw the responsibility upon the Government. That is a very proper position for the Opposition to take up, and I congratulate the honourable gentleman and his followers on having arrived at that conclusion. I regret that they did not arrive at the same conclusion last session. True, we are now in possession of a larger amount of information than we were then; but still it is much to be regretted that our railway policy, which is virtually the same, was not carried out last session,—for we should have been in a better position to arrange for the construction of the various lines than we are now. I submit that there has been undue obstruction on the part of the Opposition, which the circumstances did not justify; and I regret, as I said before, that they did not take up their present position when this policy was before the House last year. However, I am glad to accept the assurance of the honourable gentleman that he does not intend any longer to place any impediments in the way of the scheme we have so long dis-

cussed. I, for myself and my colleagues, entirely repudiate the charge which the honourable gentleman has brought against us, of making use of this policy simply for political purposes. That has certainly not been our intention; and, indeed, instead of gaining political capital by it, we shall have now to meet many serious difficulties in the carrying out of our scheme. But we are quite willing to take the responsibility of our measure, and to accept the duties which will devolve upon us in carrying it out. The honourable gentleman has always taken a very gloomy view of railway enterprise in this colony, and in that respect he differs from the honourable gentleman who sits next him—the honourable member for Maranoa. The latter is extremely sanguine, and full of gigantic projects hardly applicable at the present time; while the former seems to view all railway enterprise with doubt and distrust. When we look to the neighbouring colonies we see them constructing as many lines of railway as they possibly can, in order to open up the country and make it beneficial to live in. There is a large amount of railway enterprise going on in New South Wales, although, perhaps, not so much as the circumstances of that colony might justify. In South Australia, not content with the considerable extensions already authorized, the Government are intending to propose considerably more. The honourable gentleman is altogether mistaken with regard to the extent of the lines we propose to make. Even including the Roma section of the railway, which has been already sanctioned, it does not exceed 300 miles. And even taking the extreme case of our asking this House, as I hope we shall do, for authority to expend a certain amount of money upon the formation of branch lines, these branch lines which we contemplate do not in all certainly exceed seventy miles in extent. They are, in fact, short feeders, which we propose to construct through that portion of the country where the population is most dense. The honourable gentleman seems to infer, from some statements made by my honourable friend the Minister for Works, that we are not going on with these lines,—that we are going to indefinitely postpone them; or, as he idiomatically terms it, they are to be indefinitely shunted. I hope the honourable gentleman will take my assurance that that is not going to be the case, if we can help it. We shall endeavour not to do anything very rash or precipitate, but we shall commence railways wherever this House authorizes them to be made. We do not intend to “pile on the agony,” as the honourable gentleman would express it, and unnecessarily to raise the price of wages, for that would be a very foolish thing to do. But I hope we shall lose no time, if we are authorized to make the lines, in taking proper steps to secure their for-

mation at every point which the House may authorize. In illustration of this subject, I may refer the honourable gentleman to a very judiciously-worded paragraph at the end of Mr. Stanley's report. Of course, in matters of policy we are not guided by the opinion of our chief engineer; but the paragraph in question is wisely expressed and to the point. Mr. Stanley says—

"Before closing this report, it may not be out of place for me to refer, briefly, to the question of labour supply in connection with the carrying out of the different railway lines now proposed. There can, I think, be little doubt that to attempt to force their construction, and let a large number of contracts at once, without some scheme of increased immigration being undertaken simultaneously for the introduction of the requisite navy labour, would inevitably result in a serious disturbance of the labour market, and consequent rise in wages, whilst the estimates now prepared would, in all probability, be largely exceeded. If, however, moderately-sized contracts are judiciously let at intervals, and ample time given for their execution, sufficient labour would, I believe, be obtainable in the colony to carry out the works without affecting its ordinary industries."

We look forward to a very considerable increase of our population by immigration, and with that view we have a large amount on the Supplementary Estimates, which we propose to expend in that way. If these railways are to be carried out we must considerably augment the population. Our present stream of immigration is not so large as I should like to see it; but it would be unwise to press on immigration so long as any doubt existed as to the formation of these lines of railway. In the present state of the labour market I do not think we could have absorbed any larger amount of immigrants. We are satisfied that we can obtain a moderate supply of good labour, both from the United Kingdom and from Germany; and only the other day I had information from one of the Canadian Commissioners who lately visited this colony that we can be supplied from America with the very class of men who have made the railways in the United States. We can receive, I believe, a very large supply of that kind of labour which we most want from that source. I do not think it is necessary for me to say much more; but I hope I may be permitted to state, in reference to these additional branch lines of railway which the honourable gentleman was good enough to attribute to me as having especially advocated, and the execution of which I am supposed to wish to delay to a remote period, that I can assure the honourable gentleman that we hope, during the present session, to raise a discussion with regard to them on the vote for £220,000 which is put down on the Loan Estimate. We do not expect to be in a position to lay such

complete plans on the table of the House this session as would enable us to ask the House to authorize those lines. We intend to confine ourselves earnestly and zealously to the carrying out of those works which are essential for the welfare of the inhabitants of those districts through which the lines will run, and without unnecessarily interfering with the labour market. I presume we shall not be favoured now with any very lengthened discussion on this subject, as, according to the honourable member for Port Curtis, the other side of the House will offer no further opposition to the formation of these lines, but will throw the responsibility of that upon us. I hope that this responsibility will be acted upon in such a way as to give confidence to the country that we shall carry out those lines honestly and in the best possible way. I hope we shall restore the somewhat diminished confidence of the people of this country in their public men, and make them feel that we really are going to carry out a public works policy fitting of its kind, and worthy of the country in which we live.

Mr. McLLWRAITH said the Premier had displayed great ingenuity in twisting the explanation given by the leader of the Opposition in order to make it suit his own purpose. It was no doubt the intention of honourable members on this side of the House not to offer any further opposition to the railway policy of the Government, but that was owing to very different reasons from those assumed by the Premier—reasons which certainly did not justify that honourable gentleman in drawing the deduction that, had the same course been pursued last year, the Government would have been in a much more favourable position with regard to these lines than they were at the present time. It was not owing to the action of the Opposition that the railway policy was not carried out last year, for the measure actually passed through the Lower House; and it was entirely owing to their manipulation of the Bill in the Upper Chamber that the Government railway policy fell through. Indeed, they had good reason for supposing that the Government had something to do with the position taken up by the Upper House, for they could easily have carried the Bill through that Chamber if they had so wished. But instead of taking action in that respect they allowed their policy to fall through and withdrew the Bill. This Assembly and this Opposition had nothing whatever to do with the fate of the measure of last year. For his own part, he must say that he had offered every possible opposition to the passing of the Bill, and would do so again if necessary. The Opposition, as a whole, had fought against the public works policy of the Government to the very end; every argument they could



bring to bear against it had been employed; but the Government had carried their point, and the leader of the Opposition was perfectly justified in ceasing opposition and throwing upon them the responsibility of the measure. But that honourable gentleman might have gone still further—he might have said that the Government were very seriously to blame for having delayed giving them the necessary information with regard to these railways until the very last moment. The information laid before the House this evening could not be properly digested by the most experienced members in less than two or three days. The Government had been repeatedly pressed for it, and the Premier ought to have given it on the second reading of the Railway Reserves Bill. On that occasion the Premier told the House that if all the lines were constructed out of loan, without that fund being supplemented by the sale of land, it would lead the country into a debt of £1,200,000. That was said two months ago; and now they had information before them showing that the amount would be £1,606,510.

The PREMIER: That includes the Roma line.

Mr. McILWRAITH: And the other included the Roma line too.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was quite possible the Premier's words would not bear the construction he put upon them; but he certainly understood them to mean that all the lines asked for would cost £1,200,000. The House was now asked to sanction railways which would cost £1,606,000. He brought this forward simply to show how the information before the House varied from time to time. The same was the case with regard to the Western Railway; they were first told that it would cost £3,000 a-mile, and now it was stated that, without rolling-stock and stations, the cost per mile would be £4,700. It was perfectly impossible for the House to discuss this question with the material before it; and the very form in which the motion was put prevented discussion on many very important points. They were asked to approve of plans and sections which not one member out of ten had looked at. In addition to that, it was well known that those plans and sections, even if sanctioned, would probably be deviated from. It was quite evident that the Government did not mean to go on with any of the proposed lines, except those from Maryborough to Gympie and from Warwick to Stanthorpe. Such a power ought not to be thrown into the hands of any Government as to construct or not, as they chose, lines sanctioned by the House, and those lines only should be sanctioned which they really intended to go on with. In short, the whole

of the railway policy had been devised in order to keep a certain number of honourable members on one side of the House. There was one remark which had been repeated over and over again by the Premier to which he would refer. The Premier asserted that the railway policy of the Government was the same as last year. Now he (Mr. McIlwraith) maintained that the Railway Bill carried this year differed materially from that of last year. The admission of the Minister for Works, that it was intended to ask the sanction of Parliament for six lines and proceed only with the construction of two, was a most material change from the Government railway policy of last year. One night was set apart this session for the express purpose of eliciting this very information; but the Premier then said, in effect, that it was a grave matter which the Government were considering, and that, until a decision had been arrived at, no information could be given to the Opposition. This afternoon the Minister for Works told the House that it was intended to proceed with only two lines. The Premier, however, made a different statement, and said it was intended to construct all; but he would not specify one more than another. There was another point on which he should like to have had some information—it might be given in the papers laid that afternoon before the members; but he failed to see why the Bundaberg and Mount Perry railway should be a low-cost line, costing £3,000 per mile, whilst the other lines should cost £8,000 and under per mile. Some information should have been given as to what there was in the nature of the country to make honourable members consider that it was more adapted to a low-cost railway than any other. The opinion of the House had always been that the Maryborough and Gympie line was the one most adapted to the experiment. He could only account for the present arrangements on the supposition that, as on a previous occasion, the Maryborough and Gympie railway was lost because it was proposed to be built for £2,000 per mile; so it was intended that the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line should be shunted in the same way. He knew nothing in the features of the country to justify the Government in thinking that it was a good locality for the building of a low-cost railway. The latter part of the proposed line ran through country the most difficult that he had yet seen for railway construction. As regarded the paragraph in Mr. Stanley's report, which the Premier had already quoted, he would remind honourable members that what Mr. Stanley pointed out the Opposition had been insisting on all along, but it was only now that the Government came round to the same way of thinking. There was nothing better

proved to his mind than that the Government were going to take over a further part of the policy of the Opposition. The Opposition had told the Government repeatedly that they were proposing a railway scheme so great that they would not be able to handle it—that they were commencing far too many independent lines—that they had paid no attention to the fact that the starting of so many lines would have an injurious effect upon the labour market—and that they had no information as to where the traffic was to come from to make the lines pay. Now, in justification of his determination to throw four out of the six lines overboard, the Premier sheltered himself under a paragraph in Mr. Stanley's report—he sheltered himself under it to justify him in making his favourite line from Maryborough to Gympie alone. He agreed with the action of the leader of the Opposition; he maintained that the House had not had sufficient time given it to master the information which had been laid before it; and as it was the determination of the Government to carry the lines with or without information, he should leave the responsibility to them.

Mr. MACDONALD said he dissented from the views expressed by the honourable member for Maranoa. The leader of the Opposition and the members of the Opposition should consider it their duty, if they seriously believed that the carrying of these railways would be ruinous to the colony, to initiate discussion and invite the House to divide and express an opinion upon the scheme. He was not present last year when a similar motion was before the House; but he believed the members of the Opposition protested very strongly against the railways being taken *in globo*. If he were silent upon the question now, the country might imagine that he was prepared to adopt the policy of the Government in every particular. He differed from them, however, in this respect—that he deemed the method in which it was proposed to get these lines passed highly objectionable, inasmuch as it would be establishing a dangerous precedent. In all probability, at a future session the present Government, or their successors, would think it desirable to ask the sanction of Parliament for another series of railways, and some lines might be included in the motion even more objectionable than any of the present lot. If honourable members then objected, they would probably be told that the principle of passing lines *in globo* had been affirmed at a previous session, and that that principle should hold good for all time. It would be better, and only fair, to allow honourable members to discuss the different lines *seriatim*, for it did appear as if the Government, conscious of their strength, were determined to force them through. He did not say that he objected

to any particular one of the present lines, or that good reasons might not be given in favour of every line; but he objected to the principle of considering them *in globo*. He should be sorry to offer any factious opposition; but at the same time he could not say that on the information now before the House he was inclined to vote for every line, and if a division were called for he would vote against the motion now before the House.

Mr. BUZACOTT said that as one member of the Opposition which was stigmatized for obstructing one day and not opposing on another, he desired to say a few words. The honourable member who had just spoken thought it was his duty to sit in the House and give a steady support to the Ministry, except when something came up in which he felt an individual interest, and then he got up and complained that the Opposition did not help him. He quite concurred with the remarks which had already fallen from other honourable members on the Opposition side. They had opposed this railway scheme from beginning to end. He himself had occupied a great many more hours in debating this question than he desired, because he strongly felt that this scheme, if not ruinous, would at any rate interfere with the steady progress of the colony. He maintained that any attempt to carry out a railway scheme of the dimensions of the scheme now before the House must inevitably lead to the entire suspension of railway construction. If the Government wished to carry on railways steadily, and the colony to progress safely, they would have taken up one or two lines and carried them on to such an extent that they would have become fairly reproductive. Then the House would have been free to go in for other railways. When once a railway became reproductive, its cost was as much removed from the public debt of the colony as if it had never been undertaken. When it defrayed its own interest charges the country would be just as free to undertake other lines as if it were about to commence railway construction for the first time. He had thought a great deal over the course which he, as an individual member, ought to take in discussing this railway scheme, and he was pleased to hear that the leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Maranoa came to precisely the same conclusion as he had come to before entering the House. He did feel that, after the way the Government had forced this very scheme upon the House last session, and after having withdrawn it because it was not accepted in its entirety by the other House, his side of the House was not called upon to offer any further opposition this year. It was true that the Opposition did oppose the Railway Reserves Bill this session, but that was because it came before them in an altered form. They

restored that Bill very nearly to the form in which it passed eight months ago; and now that the identical railway scheme of last session was brought before them, he repeated that his side of the House had not sufficient cause to offer any further opposition. He must say a word or two on the discrepancy between the statement of the Premier and the Minister for Works on this subject. The Minister for Works said, and repeated several times, that the Government did not intend to carry out these railways simultaneously. He said the Stanthorpe line would be commenced first, and the Maryborough line would succeed it, and he would give no idea as to when the other lines would be undertaken. On that point he did not give the House the slightest information. The Premier got up immediately afterwards, and said that it was intended to carry out all the lines. The honourable gentleman would not be bound at all by the course laid down by his honourable colleague; but he assured the House that he hoped—he (Mr. Buzacott) could not help observing the way in which the word “hope” was introduced—every line of railway which the House chose to sanction would be commenced as soon as the circumstances of the colony would permit. He (Mr. Buzacott) took it that all that the Premier had said meant very much the same as the Minister for Works, who honestly told the House that it was not intended to begin the six lines at once. The starting of these two lines—the Stanthorpe line first, and the Maryborough line afterwards—would keep the Ministry in office for two years. This was quite sufficient for the Ministry, and the other lines would be left to their successors. That, he took it, was the course the Government intended to pursue, and all the hedging of the Premier would not lead him to any other conclusion. The Premier had thrown a responsibility upon the Opposition which he for one did not intend to accept. He said that because the Opposition had obstructed the scheme last session, he feared the Government would scarcely find themselves in so favourable a position to undertake railway construction this session—that the time had gone by when they could raise money on advantageous terms for railway construction. Now the whole principle of the Railway Bill was that the lands should be sold to construct the lines. What the condition of the London money market—to which he presumed the Premier referred—had to do with the Government carrying out their railway scheme he did not know. He did not intend to occupy the time of the House any further. He protested, as strongly as any member could protest, against this railway scheme; and he said, despite what honourable members on the other side might say or believe,

that the Opposition had carried resistance as far as they were required, and that if they joined the honourable member for Blackall and other honourable members on that side to obstruct the scheme they would be set down and believed to be opponents to railways altogether. There was no more ardent advocate for railways than he was, and he was, therefore, not going to give the Government the opportunity of allowing it to appear that he was opposed to railway construction.

Mr. THOMPSON said, in reference to the statements which had been made by the Premier and the honourable member for Port Curtis as to what was the duty of the Opposition, he would read a quotation from Todd which entirely supported the position the Opposition were taking up. It was the duty of the Opposition, as far as possible, to secure ample discussion; but when the time once came that they should give in, it was their duty not only to cease discussing, but to help the Government. It was necessary on a point like this that there should be a distinct understanding, and he would, therefore, read the passage from Todd, page 338, vol. 2:—

“A leader of the Opposition should not lend himself to any attempts to thwart unnecessarily the progress of legislation in the hands of Ministers; but should rather endeavour to secure, as far as he could, for both sides of the House a fair and free discussion; and when that discussion has been obtained, to facilitate the progress of public business, even if he disapproved of the measures of the Government.”

That was the exact position which the Opposition assumed. The stand they took up was this: They would not afford help to the Government to carry this railway scheme; they would simply cease to oppose. He was free to admit that there might be occasions when it would be the duty of the Opposition—to use a common phrase—“to die on the floor of the House” rather than submit; but this was not such an occasion. It was patent to the country that railways must be undertaken. The Opposition admitted this, but disapproved of the mode in which it was proposed to construct them. They hoped for the best, and their hope would probably be realized in the conflicting statements which came from the Treasury benches. They found the Minister for Works making one statement as to the number of lines which it was intended to proceed with, and the Premier making another which was directly opposed to it. Last year the House was distinctly told that the whole six lines would be gone on with simultaneously. That information was got from the Minister for Works last year, in reply to a distinct question. Now he said that only two would be gone on with. He was of opinion

that the time for discussion was past. He thoroughly agreed with the stand the leader of the Opposition was taking. He should protest in every way against the railway scheme of the Government; he would not assist them to carry it, but he would cease obstructing it.

Mr. PETTIGREW said that, from no fault of his, he had been absent from the House when this particular question came on for discussion last year; but he would now embrace the opportunity of expressing his views upon it. He was certainly somewhat astonished at the manner in which the scheme had been introduced upon the present occasion. The railways had certainly been introduced, as the Premier had stated, in "hope," and the honourable member for Bremer intended to have them built in "hope" by-and-by; but he (Mr. Pettigrew) was very much afraid that the people of Queensland would have to live in "hope" a long time before they would be relieved from the taxation with which they would be burdened by this scheme. Before the Government brought in a large, a magnificent scheme like this—before it was carried out, he should like the Government and their supporters to show that more produce would leave the colony. Had there been a single statement made which would warrant the House in believing that a single extra bale of wool would be produced if this scheme was adopted, or that the trade of the colony would be advanced in any way? Honourable members were asked to make railways, but were not shown how the taxes were to be paid. He maintained that this was a poor railway policy. The first question which ought to attract the attention of a Liberal Government, or any Government, before plunging the colony into a huge debt, was to see the ways and means by which that debt could be repaid, or, at all events, the interest upon it. Railways should be made on the basis of facilitating production. How many more bales of wool had been produced since the railway to Dalby was made? He had taken the trouble to look at the report on the general working of the Railway Department, and he found that in 1876 only 2,023 bales of wool came by railway over 1875; the whole quantity that had come by railway was only 30,102 bales, which, at 10s. each, would be £15,000. He would defy anyone to show that the extension from Dalby to Roma would increase production; and yet that was the line he would most willingly support, as it was an extension of their present scheme, and was going westward. What, he would ask, would that line get to make it pay? Where was the population of the interior to which it was going? He found that, deducting Chinese and Polynesians, it only amounted to 4,385 adults, and in this he included Balonne, Cunnamulla, Charleville, and the Maranoa.

They were going to run this line 166 miles further into the interior—and what would they get? Only an uncertain proportion of wool. The Darling Downs had twice as many sheep as the Western districts. The same remarks applied to the other lines. Maryborough and Gympie had only 3,871 adult males, deducting minors, Polynesians, and Chinese; and this line required special terminal stations and staff. Bundaberg had a population of 2,887, and no wool to carry. As for copper ore, the whole amount exported from the colony was 1,510 tons; and as for antimony, of which they heard so much, he only saw in 1875 an export of eighty-eight tons. The Townsville district had a population of 3,810 adults, excluding Chinese and Polynesians. Certainly they would have wool, if the produce from the far interior came to that port. He had with him a copy of *Fraser's Magazine* for May, 1877, and he would trouble the House with some extracts from it which, if the name of Queensland was substituted for that of the Cape colony, would apply to their present position. It said:—

"The recent prosperity of European countries, and especially of England, had, however, reacted favourably on the trade of the Cape, and it had fortunately escaped, in some measure, the 'progress' fever which has swept over nearly every other colony. It was not till 1872 that self-government on its present basis was finally settled for the Cape and Natal. Since the Government became possessed of taxing powers, however, there had been a considerable advance made in more respects than one, and the Cape, like our other possessions, now borrows freely. The position is still very favourable, compared with most of those, and the aims she has are thoroughly practical and good. The increase of her revenue amply justifies, so far, the outlay of the money. At the same time, it appears to me that, without more population, it is dangerous even for the Cape to push the borrowing system much further. There is a great deal of what I call superstition about the value of railways and costly public works to a new country. They are not alike valuable to different countries, and before pushing them far eastward or northward in South Africa, it should be well considered whether good waggon roads would not do instead. The experience of the United States is, so far, decidedly against the profitableness of expensively-made railways far inland in a sparsely-peopled agricultural country, and few of the States of the Union are more thinly peopled than the inland districts at the Cape. The raw produce of such territories cannot bear remunerative freights. In short—and until there is a varied and heavy trade both ways—the less expensive roads, with their bullock-waggons, are undoubtedly the best. Roads the Cape unquestionably needs, for it has no navigable rivers; but railways, except in one or two directions inland for short distances, would only prove a wasteful folly."

The population of the Cape was 1,339,000 people, including certainly Zulus and

Caffres, but these were at work the same as our Chinese. Their European population was much larger than that of Queensland.

"At present the railway projects of the Cape are, I think, very ambitious, though modest compared with those of Canada."

The article went on to show that the debt of the Cape was not so high as that of Queensland, although the population was much larger. He did not know how many sheep there were in Canada, but no doubt there were a large number, still there were 8,000,000 more at the Cape, which was 1,000,000 more than this colony possessed. The writer went on—

"So far as has yet been discovered, there are no rich stores of coal or iron to form the basis of manufactures. But we invariably find that when a new country has got railways it betrays a craving for mills and looms and all the paraphernalia of production. It finds, of course, that these railways are expensive to maintain, and wants to create traffic for them.

This was exactly the position of Queensland. He did not agree with the Minister for Works about the disturbance of the labour market. How had it been disturbed already? The farm labourers had all become cattle-growers, and it was only on creek banks and in the scrubs that any agriculture was carried on. The population all wanted to go on public works; and this was nothing wonderful when it was considered that on an average a farmer made 18s. a-week, and a labourer on the roads 39s. He would continue his extract—

"Not only has the lack of population to be taken into account, but also the nature of the produce, which, in the case of South Africa, consists, and must consist, almost entirely of articles of food and raw materials of manufactures. These, in the present developed state of many parts of the world whence competition comes, can afford little for land carriage. The herds of cattle and sheep, for example, which may be in the far interior of South Africa, are more cheaply driven towards the coast alive than they could be carried by railway; and their hides and fleeces do not need to be hurried to the coast in forty-eight hours to catch the mail-boat Home at a given date. Conceive, also, that strange absurdity of running a train across a plain through ostrich farms, where there would be only bundles of feathers to transport, sufficient in a year, perhaps, to furnish loads for a dozen or so ordinary drays, and one can then realize what railways in the interior of Africa may mean. Her products are all of the crude kind, such as copper ore, feathers, hides, ivory, wool, and hair, except a little prepared fruit and wine; and her imports need be in no hurry to get inland, consisting as they do, for the most part, of articles of food and clothing, such as wheat and rice—for the Cape does not grow even enough corn for its own wants—cotton and woollen manufactures, and so on; all of which the people do not require express trains to take them down."

This was exactly our condition. The line between Dalby and Roma would exactly answer to that description—

"Our South African colonies have a magnificent coast line, and the provinces already most occupied lie nearest the coast; so that, at the very most, all that can at present be wanted to open up the country is short lines of railway inland from the handiest port of shipment. I dwell on this, because I think South Africa, but recently emancipated from Imperial control, has shown a rather dangerous tendency to go ahead in that direction. Its debt was under £1,500,000 in 1869, including that of Natal, and the total is now nearly £6,000,000, including the Cape loan recently issued."

Well, they could beat that in Queensland. They had not one iota of information to warrant any sensible man in beginning to build railways. They had next to nothing to export at the present time. He would ask honourable members also to look at the state of the money market. The last loan had been disposed of at £91, and he supposed that, when all charges were paid, the country would get about £88 for it. Yet they proposed to go again and borrow money to bring out people,—not to put on the land, for they did not settle as agriculturists, but all wanted to become Government officers. A bad crop made a farmer leave his farm and take to work on the roads or bridges; and they were only importing a floating population and not permanent settlers. The Government, before beginning their huge railway scheme, should have some warrant that it would be payable. They proposed to put so many irons in the fire that some of them would burn, and the colony had been burned enough already. If all the railways went on, it seemed to him that the labour market would be more disturbed than ever; Queensland would become one huge Government workshop, and those employed in it would always bring pressure to bear that it might be continued. Where were they to get the money? They would borrow it in England, and spend a large proportion there, and how were they to pay the interest? If any member of the Government could show him that they would be able to send away three ships more laden with produce in consequence of the construction of the proposed lines, he would vote for them with pleasure. In the present state of the copper market he would defy them to show how it could be made to pay. The market was glutted, the supply being greater than the demand. As for Stanthorpe—what use would a railway be to that place? Was it intended to bring farmers from over the border to compete with those on the Darling Downs, or did the Government expect the latter to supply them with their surplus produce? If no more agricultural settlement went on than had taken place this year, they would not be able to supply the colony even

with horse-feed. There was not a scintilla of evidence to show that a railway would pay. He thought the strength of the Government would prove their weakness, if it enabled them to carry their railways. The Premier had spoken of the dignity of representatives; but if a Government wished to be respected it should not involve the colony in debt without showing how it was to be paid. He defied the whole Government phalanx to show how they would be able to pay interest. The action taken by the Opposition should be a warning to them. They were men of intelligence, and he believed mostly disconnected from pastoral pursuits, and they warned the Government that they would have to take the responsibility of their own railway schemes. Ever since the Liberal party had come into power they had been making white elephants; there was one in South Brisbane, the dry dock, which would cost a huge sum of money, and take years to pay working expenses—never to mention interest. This could not go on for ever. He would ask honourable members to remember 1866; in the early part of that year things were going on then as smoothly as at present. The Government were depending on their land sales, and he would tell them that there was no security so little to be depended on as land in doubtful times. The banking companies would not lock up their capital in investments which could not be readily realized. The state of affairs in Europe did not warrant Government in starting these large works. If their debentures did not sell profitably, contractors would still have to be paid, and then they would have 1866 over again. He had seen a time when a freehold in Queen street could not be sold. It was true that there was more capital in the colony now, but it was not available for the purchase of land in exciting times. It was all very well to point to the last land sale, where two or three capitalists came forward and bought up the land; but was anyone else applying for it?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. PETTIGREW said he was glad to hear the land was going in that reserve; but would it be the same in the others, and was settlement increased? He knew places in them where a capitalist would not advance sixpence on the land. He wished to warn Government as a friend. There was no opposition to their scheme; it had been withdrawn. They were never so glad in their lives as when their railway scheme was kicked out by the Upper House last year; but he would warn them not to entertain a similar hope this time, for the lines would not be all passed. He saw members on his side of the House who would never be on those benches again, for the country would never forgive

the Liberal party for their railway scheme, and they would go out of power and remain out of it. He wished to relieve himself of any responsibility in this matter. He would support certain railways that would pay, or at least would continue our present system, to carry the line from Dalby to Roma, and the railway might be left there for some years. That would occupy enough labour for the present. The same might be said respecting the Northern line; but with regard to the intermediate lines, unless it could be shown that they would pay it would be very foolish for the country to go on with them. The yield of tin from Stanthorpe was decreasing and would decrease. The statistics of the Commissioner for Railways showed that it had fallen off considerably; and why should a line to that place be constructed in the face of this state of affairs? The loss of the vote of the honourable member for Carnarvon would not destroy the Government. Why should they, therefore, make the line? There was not a bit of good land in the neighbourhood of Stanthorpe, except for grazing purposes; the tin-mines were slowly but surely expiring; and by the time the railway was made there would be no tin to carry. There was no population for the line to run to, and when it got past Stanthorpe and approached the border there was no population there. That railway was to be built simply because Mr. Hemmant went to Tenterfield, did some business, and found the population in comfortable circumstances, and thought they would make a desirable appendage to Queen street. There was only a small proportion of tin at Stanthorpe, and that was going rapidly; and if it were not for the tin who would live there? What could they do? What would grow in the place? He would like to say a few words upon the Railway Reserves Bill in connection with the railway system. It was an exploded idea that the Government had endeavoured to impress upon the House and upon the country, that the land sold would make the railway. They would find no such result. In other words, the money would be got from English capitalists simply upon the consolidated revenue of the colony. He would like further to draw the attention of the Government to a few things, though he had no hope that they would be stopped in their mad career. He should be happy to see them calmly study the matter, and select the best lines of railway—those that would most certainly pay. There were two Ministers, one on one side representing that certain lines only were to be at once commenced, and the other that all should be constructed simultaneously. He hoped that wise counsels would prevail, and that Ministers would only accept those

which it was possible or probable would pay. As he had stated before, he did not believe that the exports would, to any extent, justify these railways. He would leave the matter entirely as the Opposition had left it, to the responsibility of the Ministers. Last year there might have been some excuse for the Government, when their leader was a young man starting in political life; but after the years of calm study, and the wisdom, prudence, and judgment supposed to guide the present Premier, there was no excuse. All these things should not be forgotten; and he hoped Ministers would reconsider the matter, and find some better basis than simply hope.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Some honourable members opposite have accused me of being last session opposed to the railway policy of the Government. It will be in the recollection of honourable members that I was in the House two or three days only before the close of the session last year, and whatever the railway policy of the Government was, I had no opportunity of expressing any opinion upon it. The whole matter was decided before I came into the House. I made myself thoroughly acquainted with the policy which the Government intended to carry out before I became a member of the present Government. I found the views of the Government and my own coincided so far that I had very little difficulty to overcome. The honourable gentleman, the member for Maranoa, will do me the credit to admit that I have always been in favour of the construction of railways to open up the country, and that the land should be made responsible for it. I can remember, in contesting an election with the member for Maranoa, that the difference between him and myself was, that he was prepared for borrowing the money, and I was in favour of giving up a portion of land to pay for the construction. That was the only difference between the honourable member and myself. I believe that there is no better way to dispose of your land than by selling it for the construction of permanent public works. I found that the Government were quite prepared to go on, and to borrow a sufficient sum of money. I differ from them in that, because I should ask for a much larger sum, and sell land only to pay the interest on that money, reserving the lands for disposal as railway construction proceeded. By that means we should be likely to realize more money for the land. I daresay if I had not had a recent trip to America I should have been opposed to this undertaking. I had my eyes opened in that country. I found that they had far better facilities of transit than we have. There you have a country intersected by railways even where river navigation is good. I found that we were

half, or at least a quarter of a century behind the age. Even in such an insignificant place as Salt Lake the Mormons are, in public works, far ahead of us. The country is intersected with railways, besides tramways carrying passengers to and fro; and, so far as public convenience is concerned, they were far ahead of us. I believe it is the right thing to open up the country by railway communication. I could not help thinking, as I went along and saw a very inferior country as compared with ours, that we had only one drawback, and that was the vested interests that pastoral lessees hold over the land. I do not mean to say anything offensive, but I do think that if it had not been for the vested interests of the pastoral lessees we should not be fighting this question to day; these railways would have been, if not completed, at least in progress of construction. It is not reasonable that these gentlemen, holding as they do large tracts of country, should be expected to give them up willingly; but I am gratified to find that they have at last come to see that the time has arrived when they must give way. I was very much amused by the honourable member for Stanley, who comes down here for an hour or two every evening and tells us we are going to bring wreck and ruin on the country and insolvency everywhere. I do not think anyone would accuse me of being extravagant; on the contrary, I generally have the character of being very economical, and I should be the last man in this House to endeavour to introduce unnecessary railways. We have been accused of going in to rush six lines of railway at one time. I hope I have some little common sense left. I have not the slightest wish to rush on any railways to the detriment of private enterprise. I am perfectly aware of the responsibility of the undertaking, and am quite prepared to take my share of it. There can be no two opinions that this is a great undertaking, requiring great judgment and care to carry out the work to a successful termination, and to the benefit of the colony. I believe, if the Government carries out these works with a due regard to economy, that without question a very great deal may be done towards constructing railways at a very much lower cost than hitherto. I do not profess to put my opinion against that of professional men in this matter; but I could not help noticing that throughout the United States of America where I travelled by rail—and here perhaps I am giving my opinion against a very high authority, namely, Mr. Higginbotham—there was only one portion which I observed under ballast; yet the lines were the most agreeable I ever travelled on, and perfectly safe. We might also economize a great deal by not being quite so particular as to the kind of timber used. I think, in carrying out

this scheme of railways, it would be well at all events to give our own timber that has been condemned a trial. It could be no great loss to have half-a-mile or a mile laid down, and see if it would stand the wear and tear. At present there is only one kind of timber in the colony—namely, ironbark—that can be made use of for tires and sleepers; but I am convinced there are other kinds equally good. I think an experiment might be tried upon the Western extension. Professional men sometimes run in a particular groove; but before this extension reaches Roma you will go through a country where there are large forests of cypress pine, and from my experience of the manner in which that timber stands in the ground I believe it will be found equal to ironbark. Perhaps our engineers will turn up their noses, and say they will have nothing to do with it; but if I were Minister for Works I would insist upon a trial. I would force it upon them, as no great loss could result from having a mile or two of railway constructed with that description of timber. In completing the railway on the Roma extension a large number of piles are required. These are nearly all of ironbark, and iron-shod; but I consider that in the loose soil they would do as well without iron as with it; and in many other ways a considerable saving might be effected in the construction of our railways. I know my honourable colleague has to encounter a difficulty arising from the fact that professional men like to go in a certain groove; but if I were in his place, and they would not take my opinion and give these things a trial, I should be very much inclined to get rid of them. I believe a great deal of the money now spent upon railways is thrown away. It always struck me as very extraordinary, that when we take our railways through a timber country, where there is plenty of timber all along the lines, wire fences are used; and where there is no timber for twenty or thirty miles, there they use timber for their fencing. This is a state of things which a man of very ordinary sense can see the absurdity of; and I hope that, in the event of the Government succeeding in carrying this resolution, the Minister for Works will use (as I shall use) all the influence in his power to endeavour to economize, so that the work shall be carried out as efficiently and as strictly as possible. In America I also observed the manner in which they construct their trucks for the carriage of goods. We import our framework from England. In America the trucks are all made of timber; and it seems to me a most extraordinary thing that here, where we have an abundance of the best timber in the world, we go to England and import iron frames for our goods trucks. A good deal might be saved here. I must say that, before this question is decided, I myself

should prefer that a division should be taken upon the question. I would not care to undertake the responsibility unless we have the confidence of the House; and I am sure at all events that if we have not the confidence of the House we have the confidence of the country. It is utterly impossible that we can progress unless we can open up the country by railways. If we do this we shall settle a large population, and I believe these other lines will be found as profitable as those constructed for the West. Within the Wide Bay and Burnett reserve there is a large quantity of land specially adapted for settlement, and we might, I firmly believe, get a large population there. The same I may say of Bundaberg, where there might be as profitable a line as any in Queensland. While I am on this question, I may allude to the small quantity of land sold in the Western Railway Reserve. I believe my honourable colleague got the full value for the land; but he put it up at a price that defied all competition. I am free to admit, as I said before, that he got the full value; but I should like him to do something more than get a high price for land. What I want him to do is, to induce people to come from other colonies and bring capital and population; and I should very much like to persuade the honourable gentleman on the next occasion when he puts land up not to fix so high a price, but a price that will attract population and capital. At present we have neither population nor capital within ourselves, and we must hold out inducements to people from afar. I do not care so much about high-priced land. I want people; and people bring money. Moreover, I always look upon the land as a commodity that cannot be removed. The land is always with you. You cannot take it away, as it is not a commodity that can be removed. I hope that our railway policy will do all that I have indicated; that it will bring population and capital to the country, and that still we shall have our lands all the same. I trust the House will agree to these resolutions, as by so doing they will confer the greatest benefit that has ever been conferred on the country by a Queensland Legislature.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he had been very much surprised at the course pursued by the Government in setting up supporter after supporter to speak against time. There had not been a single word said on the Government side of the House in favour of the proposed railways; either what would be their traffic, what they would cost, or whether they were likely to pay. Absolutely nothing had been shown in reference to the question. Honourable member after honourable member had talked against time; although, after what they had heard from the honourable member for Port Curtis, they knew there would



be no opposition. The only cause he could assign for such conduct was, that they were afraid to go into Committee of Supply. They had spent the whole evening talking about things which did not bear in the slightest degree upon the question before the House,—except perhaps a few words from the Colonial Secretary, when he talked of the desirability of exercising more economy in the construction of railways.

Mr. HALY said he had not intended to speak that evening, for when he heard the honourable leader of the Opposition say that they were not going to have a division he was so disgusted that he did not intend to say a word. He thought at the same time that the leader of the Opposition was playing a deep game, and wished to get the Government into such a state of difficulty that they would have to go to him to get them out of it. That was the case some years ago, when the honourable member for Port Curtis, after succeeding a Government which had left only half-a-crown in the Treasury, on his retirement from office left a credit balance of £200,000. He for one was determined to oppose the construction of any railways until it was distinctly stated what they were to cost; and he would go further and say, that until they combined a system of irrigation with railway construction all the talk about bringing capital and population to the colony was a perfect farce. It was a nice thing to hear that the Western Railway from Dulacca to Roma was to cost £4,636 a-mile, when it was known that in the neighbouring colony they had made, not a three feet six but a five feet three inches gauge line for £3,500 a-mile. He contended it was a disgrace to the Government to ask the House to assent to such things. He had at the same time no fault to find with the present engineer; but if they could not get one to construct railways cheaper than the proposed lines were to cost they had better do without them. He held the same opinion as the Colonial Secretary in one respect—namely, that the country could not be properly thrown open without railways, as to make macadamized roads was throwing so much money into the mud. But if the country was to be thrown open by means of railways it was a duty of the Government to see that the engineers were able to make them at the same cost as in the neighbouring colony. He remembered meeting the honourable the Colonial Secretary in a railway carriage shortly after the honourable gentleman's return to the colony, and he then said that after what he had seen in America he would never go into the Parliament again; but by some strong influence on the part of the honourable gentlemen on the Treasury benches the honourable gentleman joined the Government, and now talked in a most

grandiloquent way about squatters giving way, opening up the country by railways, and bringing capital and population to it, and keeping them in the country. It was impossible, however, to keep either capital or population in the country unless there was a supply of water, and also protection from damage by floods; and he (Mr. Haly) contended that they would never insure agricultural settlement unless they carried on railway works and irrigation at the same time. He had heard the honourable member for Bulimba fight for his own opinion on the Board for Prevention of Disease in Plants and Animals, and frequently, in so doing, set himself in opposition to the opinions of scientific men; but now, when the resolutions he tabled, which were not now worth the paper on which they were written, ought to have been debated, by some influence from the Treasury benches he had not a word to say in their favour. The honourable gentleman had told him that he had figures showing that in America there were engines that could draw 800 tons on a level, and 100 tons on a gradient of one in fifty, which would cost only £1,700 or £1,800 each, and would work on rails weighing only thirty pounds to the yard. The honourable gentleman also mentioned other things to show how cheap was the cost of railways in that country compared with what it was here. He considered that the Government were accepting a very serious and difficult responsibility, by asking the House to assent to the resolutions before it, and that before many years were over they would have their cheque dishonoured the same as in the year 1866. From the way in which the Colonial Secretary used to fight for economy when a private member, he thought, when he heard that the honourable gentleman had joined the Government, that the colony was saved. Instead of that, however, it would be ruined if the Government went on as they were now doing. He might mention what he regarded as a rather suspicious circumstance in connection with the ability of the Government to carry out the railways,—for instance, that he had been told by the honourable member opposite that whenever the honourable member for Port Curtis was the head of the Government he should support him, as he believed that that gentleman was the only man to carry out railways properly, and that when he said a thing he would adhere to it. Instead of that, the Colonial Secretary had been talking to them about the benefit to be derived from the proposed railways, not believing one word of what he said. He would repeat, that no railways would pay or be of benefit to the country unless carried out simultaneously with a comprehensive system of irrigation.

Mr. MACROSSAN said it would be a very interesting calculation for any honourable member who was arithmetically inclined, to reckon the number of days, hours, and even weeks, that had been spent during this session and last in the discussion of the railway policy of the Government. And after all the discussions that had taken place—and some of them had been very bitter and acrimonious—what had that policy resulted in? It had been changed three or four different times. The Ministry came into power with the statement that they were not prepared to make any railways; and immediately afterwards they went in for what had been styled an “extravagant railway policy.” Railways were then to be constructed solely from the sale of public lands. This session another change took place, when it was announced that they should be constructed from loans, and that the land should be sold only to meet interest. That great scheme had now dwindled down to the miserable result of the Maryborough and Gympie railway. The Minister for Works stated distinctly that they were not prepared to go on simultaneously with all these railways, and that they would begin with the lines from Warwick to Stanthorpe and from Maryborough to Gympie—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I may state that the reason for that was—

Mr. MACROSSAN said he had nothing to do with the honourable gentleman's reasons; he was simply dealing with his statements. Ministers had distinctly told the House that they would stand or fall by their railway policy, and were prepared to make the whole of the six railways at once; but the Premier now sheltered himself under the very argument that had been used against the construction of these railways, for not going on with more than two of them,—he hid himself behind the labour question, and told the House that there was plenty of labour to be obtained from Germany at some future time. He (Mr. Macrossan) protested against the importation of labourers from Germany, so long as there were plenty of willing hands to be got from the country which we all came from. He had nothing to say against German colonists as citizens; but he objected to them being brought here at the expense of the State while they could obtain so many thousands of labourers from Great Britain and Ireland. The Stanthorpe line had always been the favourite of the party at present in power, and was advocated three years ago. So that the only really new line to be constructed was that between Maryborough and Gympie; and the rest of that great railway policy which had agitated the country from north to south, and raised the expectations of half the electorates in the colony, dwindled down to that insignificant scheme for which the

Premier had put himself up for sale. He had succeeded. He had sold himself, the House, and the country; because the country had been led to believe that the whole of the six railways would be constructed at the same time. When the honourable member accused the Opposition of obstructing the railway policy, and said he was glad that it would meet with no further opposition, he was merely taking shelter under another argument which was equally as fallacious as the labour question. Last year the Government had no intention of borrowing money to make railways, and it did not matter on that account whether the railways were obstructed or not. Now, when it was their intention to borrow money, they found that they could not borrow it on the same terms as then, and it suited the purpose of the Premier to turn round and accuse the Opposition of preventing the Government from borrowing money when it could be had cheap. He was interested in one railway out of the six, and he protested against the action of the Government. His constituents had been led to believe that they would have a railway; but it now appeared that the Government had very little intention of making a line from Townsville to Charters Towers. He believed the Colonial Secretary had changed his mind upon the railway question, and that he had brought about this deplorable result of their having only two railways instead of six. He believed that honourable gentleman had had influence enough with the Government to induce them to forego the railway scheme which he himself denounced last session when he sat on this side of the House, and said he would oppose it tooth and nail the following session. Neither the Colonial Secretary, however, nor any other member of the Government could any longer shelter themselves under the idea that they were going to blind the country into the belief that they were a railway-making Government. For the purpose of making those two lines of railway the House was called upon to pass six or seven lines *in globo*, without having the chance of considering them *seriatim*, letting each stand on its own merits. They were asked to establish a most dangerous and immoral precedent—namely, that because one man was interested in the making of a particular railway, and did not believe in the making of another, he should vote for the two lines for the sake of getting one of them. Although he was very much interested in one particular line of railway, he would be a party to no such system, and his constituents would bear him out in any course of action he might take. He should not vote for the railways *in globo*. If they were to be taken *seriatim*, he might perhaps vote against one out of the six; but he certainly should not vote for them all *in globo*, especially after the declaration made by the

Premier at the beginning of this year at Bundaberg, that the line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry was the weakest of the bunch, and that if it was not put with the others it would not be carried. How could honourable members give their vote for these six railways *in globo* in the face of that declaration? He had sufficient confidence in the railway which was at some future time to be made in his district to believe that that railway would stand the test of increased production and payment by traffic. It was well known by all who understood anything about the Western country that as soon as that railway was made thousands of miles of country on the Diamantina and the Western rivers, now being grazed over by cattle would then be grazed by sheep, and that thousands of bales of wool would come down by that railway where not one was now being produced. As to the information furnished by the Government that evening, he believed it was their desire that the Opposition should object to the passing of these lines on account of the insufficient information, and then they would have the opportunity of charging them with factious obstruction. He was glad to find that the Opposition had adopted a wiser course, and thrown the whole responsibility and onus, not only of making all these lines, but of not making them, upon the Government. That was a responsibility which they saw now and would fain decline to accept, but it was one which they would be compelled to accept. He approved of the course taken by the Opposition, and he would now enter his protest against these railways being voted for *in globo*, simply on account of the immoral precedent which it would establish in this House. He would ask honourable gentlemen to consider for a moment the dangerous position they were placing themselves and all future Parliaments in. There might be other Ministries in existence in this colony at some future period who might be more corrupt, and who would cling to office as tenaciously as the present one, and who might have even a grander scheme than this to flaunt before the public. If they chose to adopt a similar course to this, they might appeal to their supporters with the plea that a similar course of action had been taken before by the members of the Liberal party. Another very important question arose with regard to the branch lines, for which some £220,000 was put down on the Loan Estimates. He would ask honourable members who had an interest in the making of these lines, if they believed that they would be able to get them made until the whole of the other six lines had been at least commenced? They should consider that, and should compel the Government, if they had any interest in seeing the country go ahead, to

go on with the whole six lines, as they had led the country to believe they would. They had been told that the progress of the country depended upon the making of these lines. If that was the case last year it was even more so this year, and would be so to a still greater extent next year. By what process of selection the Government had chosen the Maryborough and Gympie railway in preference to that from Charters Towers to Townsville, or from Bundaberg to Mount Perry, it was left to honourable members to imagine. It could not be supposed that that line would induce a larger settlement of population than either of the others, or that it would be more payable. He maintained that it would be less payable than that from Charters Towers to Townsville. He did not say this because he represented that district, but because it had been shown the other evening that already on the road between these two towns traffic amounting to 7,000 tons a-year passed one way. There was no such traffic at present on the road between Maryborough and Gympie; indeed he believed there was not half the amount of traffic that there was at present on the road between Charters Towers and Townsville. With the railway that traffic would be more than doubled, for it would open up the whole of the great Western country. No such result could be expected to accrue from the Maryborough and Gympie line, for the only result would be that it must be continued to Brisbane in order to make it a paying or productive line at all. He hoped honourable members would consider the position in which the Government were placing themselves in selecting those two lines, and going before the country in the invidious position of not having realized the hopes of the people which they themselves had raised. But for the Government the people would not have expected so many lines to be made, and having raised those hopes, it was their duty to realize them to the fullest extent. The only objection he had to the scheme was, that the lines were to be voted for *in globo*. Were they to be taken *seriatim*, the only line to which he should take exception—and even that might be removed if the Minister for Works adduced facts and figures making out a better case—would be that from Bundaberg to Mount Perry.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: An old proverb tells us that there is nothing new under the sun, and certainly there is nothing new to be found in our debates on the railway question. In 1863, when the question of railway construction was first introduced into the colony, the same lamentable consequences were predicted of a young colony launching out into such a system of extravagance.

Mr. PALMER: It came quite true.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The honourable member for Port Curtis may think so, but others hold the idea that it has turned out very well indeed, and that the country would not have been so far advanced now had there not been bold statesmen at the helm in those days. I have listened with considerable curiosity to the objections made to the scheme now before the House. They certainly do not lack diversity. The first was made by the honourable member for Port Curtis, who objected generally that short lines did not pay, and gave as an instance the line from Rockhampton to Westwood. That was simply a line going to nothing more than a roadside public-house. It was hardly to be wondered at that the traffic on that line was very limited, for by the time that drays reached Westwood they had travelled over 100, and often 300 or 400 miles from the interior; and it would be of very little consequence to them to go on twenty-five miles further. Indeed, it would be a saving of trouble, for they would not have to unload at Westwood, and again on arriving at Rockhampton, besides being compelled to put up where there was no accommodation. It is manifest that a line of this kind would never pay. Now, the line from Maryborough to Gympie, for instance, does not travel through a country without settlement, and the line from Bundaberg to Mount Perry is a line between two termini not so far apart certainly as Brisbane and Roma, but it is certain that traffic will be developed between those two places and the surrounding country which, it may be hoped, will not only pay interest on the construction but also yield a profit. Another objection is, that by making the whole of these lines at once we shall ruin the labour market; while other members insist that we ought to do so and ruin the labour market. One honourable gentleman says that Government ought to be forced to carry on this ruinous scheme; another honourable member asserts that the ruin consists in making six railways at once; and another says we are bound to make six railways at once; while others object that we are only going to make two. Where do they get their information from? Certainly not from any member of the Government. The line from Warwick to Stanthorpe is said to have been introduced to please one member of this House; but five years ago I myself introduced a motion for the survey of a line from Warwick to Stanthorpe, and I have never ceased from that time to this to believe in that line; and judging from the division last year, a large majority of honourable members are of the same opinion. Then there is the line from the Comet to Emerald Downs. Is that a new line? It is simply an extension in the same way as the line from Dulacca to Roma. Has it ever been suggested that

the Government are going to stop all work beyond the Comet? Is there not a regular staff of officers and engineers who will finish their work on the Comet about the end of the present year? It has always been understood to be a part of the railway policy of the Government to ask the sanction of Parliament for further extension of that line, so as to keep the staff employed. Supposing the contract for the construction of the line from Dulacca to Roma were tendered for at once, it would greatly enhance the cost, for the contractor would have to carry his sleepers and other material to that spot before the intervening portion of the line was completed. Governments must act in these matters in the same way as private individuals. The tenders for the Maryborough and Gympie line are ready to be called for almost at once; but the others are not ready—and indeed it would be folly to advertise all the tenders in the same number of the *Gazette*. If there were several public buildings, for instance, to be erected at Maryborough or Rockhampton, and Government were to call for the tenders all at once, the result would be to greatly increase the expense; and no Government would be justified in doing that. Because it is intended to commence at once with the construction of one or two lines, it does not follow that any one of the six will be put off longer than is absolutely necessary. As soon as the other lines can be made with due regard to the general interests of the colony they will be made. It would be unwise to call for tenders when the labour market was abnormally scanty, and any Government that attempted to do so would deservedly meet with the fate which attended the Government which constructed the line from Brisbane to Ipswich on the principles on which that line was made. Not a single reasonable objection has been made to a single one of the proposed lines. When we hear the railway scheme of the Government denounced as extravagant and ruinous, one would expect reasons in support of such assertions; but none have been given. The objections have been limited to the lines from Warwick to Stanthorpe, and Maryborough to Gympie. If these lines were advocated simply to carry goods from the nearest port, they would most likely not be made; but those who believe in railway construction advocate it on different principles. They believe that railways open up the country, make the land more valuable, and increase settlement and traffic. There is a large amount of traffic and much valuable land between Maryborough and Gympie, and we know that there is an enormous demand for land in the district which will be approached by this railway. We know that there is land in the district which will not be settled upon until a railway supplies cheaper

and speedier communication with the seacoast; and for these reasons the Government consider themselves justified in making this line. The same principles apply to the Charters Towers line. That line will assist in the development of the Diamantina country, and also, I trust, in the development of the great mineral wealth of Charters Towers. It has been urged that we do not propose to immediately go on with the whole of the lines. Even if we did not propose to make some of them for a year or two, I say that is no good reason why we should not include them in the present scheme. We cannot go to the loan market every year to borrow money. We, therefore, propose to borrow such sums as may be required for the next year or two for railway construction. If we only proposed to borrow money for those lines for which tenders can be called at once, we should be doing very wrong; numerous small loans would not benefit, but would injure the credit of the colony; and we are, therefore, bound to include in this scheme the amount which we consider necessary for railway construction for a few years to come. I think I have now answered all the arguments that have been made use of. As a matter of fact, the objections have not been to the railways but to the Government. I will give the honourable member for Stanley and the honourable member for Burnett the credit to say that they did object to the railways; but these were the only two members. I am certain that a large majority of the members of the House believe in these railways. If they don't, why is it not moved that the lines objected to be omitted? I repeat, honourable members on the other side have no objection to the lines, but to the Government; they would have no objection to make the lines themselves. The last matter that I have to answer is the phantom conjured up, not so much this session as last session. It has been alleged that the Ministry have changed their policy, and in support of the allegation speeches are brought forward which it has been explained over and over again were not delivered in the sense which is attempted to be put on them. Then it is said that the Government are not in earnest, and do not intend to make railways; that has been refuted over and over again. Next it is asserted that since last year we have changed our policy—that last year we proposed to build railways wholly from the proceeds derived from the sale of lands. If honourable members will refer to the Estimates of last year, they will find that we proposed to borrow within £100,000 of the amount we have now on the Estimates for railways. I don't know that there are any other objections to answer. I have endeavoured to answer the arguments such as they have been. This

House, I maintain, has already, by a large majority—by the passing of the Railway Reserves Bill—affirmed the desirability of making these lines. A large majority is in favour of making them one and all; and after all the amount we propose to borrow on the security of the credit of the colony does not amount to more than £1,300,000. In 1863, when the population of Queensland was not more than a fourth of what it now is, it was not considered a rash scheme to go in for one railway which was more expensive than the whole of those now proposed. I am satisfied that the lines can be made for the estimated amount, and that before ten years elapse each line will produce an income over and above working expenses and interest on the cost of construction, and settlement on the lands of the colony will be enormously enhanced.

Mr. WALSH said it was impossible for honourable members on the Opposition benches to divine what question was really before the House. They found that members got up either to attack the policy of the Government, or, like the last speaker, to attack statements and objections which had never been made. So far as he knew there had been no opposition from his side of the House to the railway policy of the Government. There was a general concurrence of opinion not to obstruct the Government. He was unable to make the speeches of the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney-General agree on this question; and as regarded the Attorney-General's speech, he could not, for the life of him, understand with whom he was quarrelling, except it was the Minister for Works or some other of his colleagues. It had been said that this was a small matter, involving an expenditure of £1,300,000. He maintained that it would involve an expenditure of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000. Some members might disagree with this; but his experience in railway-making, and it had been considerable, went to show that this expenditure would be necessary. The railway that he had made when in office was honestly made; and, as far as he knew, not one shilling was wasted upon it. If there were mistakes made, they were after he left office; at any rate they were not his. But he did not believe such grave mistakes were made as was continually asserted by petty retailers of railway gossip. He made no accusations, however, against his successor as regards that railway. With regard to the question before the House, he maintained that the whole of the evening had been occupied to raise an outcry against the railway policy of the Opposition. The Government were afraid of that policy. When the House passed their railway scheme last year, and gave them authority to construct five or six lines, they managed, overtly he maintained, to get the

motion thrown out of the other House. If they did not overtly bring about the rejection of that motion they at any rate withdrew the whole of the lines because one was rejected. If they had been in earnest, they would have gone on with one or two lines which honourable members believed would be useful, and which would have been well advanced by this time. But they were afraid to lose supporters, and they overtly sanctioned the rejection of the scheme. If the proposed lines were really necessary, and the Government was intent upon making them, why did they not make it one of the chief measures of the session? Why did they not propose this motion two months ago? But the whole of their conduct was of a piece. They were not in earnest in this matter, and he did not hesitate to say that they had not the brains to carry out such a policy. Judging by the speeches of the honourable the Minister for Works and the Premier, the Government dared not go on with more than two lines. After all their boasting that they were in earnest in constructing from six to thirteen lines of railway, they now admitted that they would not go on with more than two, and gave as a reason that it was because the labour market and the money arrangements of the colony would be disturbed. It suited them to carry on in this way. They kept the other lines in abeyance, so that they might be able to renew their policy of coercing and buying constituencies. The telegraph, the Press, and Parliament had been employed to hound down the Opposition—to make the country believe that the Opposition were opposing their railway scheme. But what did they find? That after the Government had denounced the Opposition in this way they came to the House and laid down the plans of six lines, but said it was not expedient to begin more than two. Did not the Opposition last year warn honourable members, who were supporting the Government because of their railway policy, that they were being humbugged and made fools of? And the experience of last session proved that the warning was correct. The policy of the Opposition had ever been to make railways. The present railway policy of the Government was forced upon them; and even now, when the Opposition were inclined to assist them, they found the Government hanging back again. Why, he would ask, was the Highfields line left out of this batch—this ring, if he might so term it—of lines? Was it as a punishment, or to coerce the honourable member for Toowoomba, or the honourable member for Aubigny? The Government had promised thirteen lines; but had qualified the promise by saying that they would only undertake to construct the lines when it was expedient in the interests of the colony to do so. Why did they not promise a rail-

way to every district in the colony? Did the honourable members for Mulgrave and Gympie expect to get their railways? or the other honourable members who had been miserably humbugged with promises throughout this session? He warned honourable members that if ever an act of folly was committed it was the initiation of these six lines of railway. No colony in Australia, much less Queensland, could bear the strain upon its resources which would be caused by such an undertaking. He maintained that the House was being asked to sanction a great crime—a crime which would plunge the colony into irretrievable debt. No sane man, with the resources at his command which this colony had, would think of rushing into the construction of six or seven railways at once. But unfortunately our politics necessitated this great crime. This railway scheme was an absolute crime, and was brought forward solely to keep a certain party on the other side of the House. It seemed to him absurd to attempt to combat the arguments which had been advanced in favour of the proposition that these lines would pay. The last accounts from the United States showed that the railways there were not paying 1 per cent.—that they were a failure. And the United States were constantly held up as a pattern in the matter of railway construction. As regarded the Stanthorpe line, he held a letter written by a gentleman who would benefit by the construction of that line more than any other resident of Stanthorpe. It would be an absolute fortune to him, yet he was opposed to it. He would read the letter:—

“I observe in the debate on the Railway Reserves Bill Mr. Douglas is reported to have said, ‘With regard to the proposed lines of railway, the ultimate intention was of course to take the Southern line to the border; but he did not think that the House would, during the present session, be asked to authorize its extension further than Stanthorpe.’ Now this is a most insidious way of placing the matter. It is well known that for a long time past the Stanthorpe politicians (?) have decided to ignore the ‘border’ part of the programme and have simply a line to Stanthorpe, which, being the terminus, would in that event benefit greatly by the formation of the line. It is of course open to these people to do the best they can for themselves, but that I consider is not public policy. The line was asked for distinctly last session as a railway to the border of New South Wales, on the special grounds of thus becoming a national undertaking. By taking it to Stanthorpe only, in the first instance, it loses its national character. Both the border lands and the border trade and traffic will be much more valuable than anything Stanthorpe can furnish. The town is on its last legs; the old places that furnished its tin supplies almost if not quite exhausted; no available agricultural land to any extent in its immediate vicinity. If the Railway Bill does not pass this session I

believe the place will be next to abandoned. The tin lands of the future and the best agricultural and pastoral lands are between Stanthorpe and the border. Other townships will eventually arise on this route as business and population determine. Looked at from a public point of view, I do not see why Stanthorpe or any other place is to be bolstered up to the prejudice of a national project of public policy. If it is to be decided there is to be a railway to the border, why not legitimately commence the work conjointly at Warwick and at the border? The section from the border to Stanthorpe being the shortest, cheapest, and easiest to make, will be finished first, and the traffic over the border will be at once secured, and Stanthorpe greatly benefited by the great additional carrying trade to Warwick thereby created, pending the completion of the line. If there is to be a line to Stanthorpe only it will be a failure."

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Name; name.

MR. WALSH said he did not think that it was necessary to give the name, but it was only one of many opinions that he had heard expressed with regard to this line. Then, with reference to the Maryborough and Gympie line, when it was brought before the House last year he pronounced it to be a gross imposition. There could not possibly be any trade established by it; and when the Attorney-General talked of it developing trade and mineral resources he showed that he knew nothing of the subject. He (Mr. Walsh) said that that line led nowhere; it might benefit a few mineral speculators, but it would be of no benefit to the colony. The late Colonial Treasurer had shown that the passenger traffic was only something like one and a-half per diem. What was to be carried by such a line? Gold? All the gold produced in a year would not make a load for a railway truck. They had been told of the agricultural resources of the district; but he did not know of a place in the world where agriculture or pastoral occupation would make a line pay. Only two things would do that—a large population, or minerals. If the House was determined to sanction the railway policy of the Government, he would ask of it to compel them to act up to their promises and commence all the railways simultaneously. He did not want to see honourable members made fools of, and he thought that was what would happen to everyone who had been compelled by his constituents to support the Government on account of their railway policy. He called on those honourable members to see that Government did not begin to construct one of those lines before the other. He would make no further opposition to those lines; he was sure, however, that the country was about to enter on a most perilous course, and it would entail on Government and their supporters a severe punishment in the future.

MR. GRIMES said that he thought the House had committed itself to the railway

policy of the Government by passing the Railway Reserves Bill. As a supporter, in a general way, of the Liberal party, and as one who desired to see Constitutional Government properly carried out, he considered that, except in extreme cases, a minority ought to yield to a majority, and, therefore, thought that further opposition on his part to that policy would not be necessary. He had no idea, when placing the contingent resolutions standing in his name on the notice paper, that they would in any way hamper the Government. It had seemed to him that when the House was resolved to construct these new railway lines, that it was the duty of independent members to endeavour that they should get the longest possible lines for the money to be spent on them. He had wished, therefore, to direct the discussion in that direction; but he found that such a result would be impossible under his resolutions, and he had not, therefore, moved them at the proper time. No doubt his conduct had given dissatisfaction to some honourable members, but he could not help that. He was there to do his duty to his constituents and the colony at large, and he claimed that he had always to the best of his ability done so. It had been represented to him that the discussion which he wished to raise would best take place when the amounts set down on the Estimates for the various lines came under discussion. The honourable member for Leichhardt had given some information to the House which he (Mr. Grimes) had furnished him; but he had in a most remarkable way mixed up some which he must have obtained elsewhere with it. He denied having furnished all the information which that honourable member had given to the House. Under the system of railway construction in the United States they had rolling-stock which would take a gradient of 1 in 17. He thought if they could alter their present system, so that gradients of 1 in 50 could be reduced to 1 in 30, a very considerable saving could be effected in the cost of construction; and if they could get 120 miles of railway for what would now be the cost of sixty, the lines would be more likely to pay. Short lengths of railway would not pay, unless when uniting two towns of considerable population. He did not intend to offer any opposition to the resolutions that night; but he hoped that when the amounts set down for the cost of constructing the various lines came on for discussion his suggestions would receive the serious consideration of the House. He had often expressed an opinion opposed to the resolutions; but he did not consider himself justified in opposing that which had been decided by a majority of the House.

MR. W. SCOTT said that he thought the Bundaberg line had been severely treated

by some honourable members who had spoken about it; but if they had seen the district in question they would have changed their minds on the subject. He could not understand, however, why the Government had altered their proposal to a railway "in the direction" of Mount Perry. Last year they had been told that it was only carried a certain distance because there had been no time to complete the survey beyond New Moonta. This excuse would no longer hold good, and he supposed the delay was made because he was not a Government supporter. He thought the proposed Bundaberg line would be the most payable one in the colony. He was astonished at the way the honourable member for Warrego had spoken about it, when he remembered that, but for his opposition, Mr. Vickery would have made the line years ago for grants of alternate blocks of land. In consequence of that proposition not having been accepted the country had lost a great deal; and he could state, without fear of contradiction, that the population of the Mulgrave district would by this time have amounted to 30,000 instead of 5,000. He could not understand why the Government had changed their intention of making the railway to Mount Perry, as it was evident that the line could be carried cheaply beyond the point at which it was now proposed to end it. There was plenty of mineral land beyond Mount Perry, and good grazing country. No doubt the honourable member for the Burnett would only be too glad to support the line if he saw it would assist him in reaching a market. He did not understand why the Maryborough and Gympie line should be the first started, unless it was with the intention of ultimately carrying it on to Brisbane, and thus causing Maryborough to lose all the Gympie traffic. He had heard the honourable member for Gympie say that it would be so continued, and that Gympie would only be a station on the line from Maryborough to Brisbane.

Mr. WALSH said he wished to call the attention of the House to an evident error in the book of reference of the Maryborough line. It referred to a branch line to the wharf in that place, which was not mentioned in the resolution before the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was a mistake. The line would start from the Ninety-acre Reserve.

The PREMIER said that the reference was only to a suggested line, which had not been included in the estimate.

Mr. WALSH said that the Government asked for Parliamentary sanction to the book of reference which contained it. The mistake should be rectified.

The PREMIER said he thought the honourable member should be satisfied with

his explanation, that the branch in question was not included in what they asked the House to sanction. The Government did not appear there as professional exponents of every point in the book of reference.

Mr. IVORY said that it seemed very suspicious that the Premier should refuse to amend the error now that his attention had been drawn to it. The reference to a branch line, if not mentioned in the notice paper, had no business to appear where it did. If they allowed it to pass they would be told on a future occasion that *Hansard* was incorrect, and that they would have to be guided by the Proceedings of the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the question was if this was a mistake or not. If it was, surely the Premier might correct it at once.

Mr. PALMER said he thought it was a question for the Speaker to decide, as it was a point of order. The resolution was to the effect that the House approved of certain lines, and there was no mention in it of the wharf branch spoken of in the book of reference.

The SPEAKER said that it was no business of his to examine into the manner in which the Minister for Works framed the plans he laid upon the table of the House; but if the book of reference alluded to a branch not mentioned in the resolution, it was incorrect.

The PREMIER said that the Speaker was no doubt right; but the line in question was only indicated by dots in the plan. He admitted that it should be struck out of the book of reference, and he thought if the Minister for Works scored it out, and put his initials to the correction, it would meet the case.

Mr. WALSH said he had thought it his duty to call attention to the fact. He did not intend to harass the Government; but if the House sanctioned the book of reference unaltered it would sanction the branch. He thought the suggestion of the Premier satisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would have no objection, with the permission of the House, to make the required amendment.

Mr. MCILWRAITH said he saw no way of doing it except by a resolution of the House.

The SPEAKER said that it had been stated that the reference was made in error, and he, therefore, asked if it was the pleasure of the House that it should be amended.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that it would be as well to see that no similar mistake had been made with regard to the other lines. He thought they had better be withdrawn, so that honourable members might carefully analyze and check the plans. It was no child's play they were engaged in, when undertaking the expenditure of very large sums of money.



Mr. WALSH asked how the matter had been finally arranged? He did not quite understand.

The SPEAKER said that he would order the book of reference to be amended as by direction of the House.

The resolutions were then put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the branch railway line from Highfields railway station to Highfields summit, laid upon the table of this House.

2. That the said plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form.

He stated that the money for this line was passed last session, and it was necessary to get Parliamentary sanction to the plans on the present occasion. The line would start from a few chains above Highfields station, and for the first eight chains would run on a gradient of 1 in 30. For the next forty-eight chains the gradient would be 1 in  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 in  $6\frac{1}{2}$ . On the top of the range there would be twelve chains of level country available for sidings and station buildings. This line could be worked either by a stationary engine on the summit, with wire rope, or by a locomotive engine with cog driving-wheel. For many reasons it was thought better to use the locomotive, because when it was not working on the incline it could be used for shunting purposes. Water could be readily procured at the bottom, though none was obtainable at the top, except at great expense. There were three places in the world where more severe gradients were encountered in railways—Mount Washington, in the United States; the Rigi, in Switzerland; and the Kahlenberg, near Vienna. The engine they contemplated having would be able to take up thirty tons in addition to its own weight.

Mr. PALMER said he was not going to object to this line of railway, but he rose to allude to the want of candour shown by the Government with respect to the alleged mistake in the reference book, in which the Maryborough railway was described as extended to the wharf. He had ascertained since the subject had been discussed that there was no mistake at all in the matter, as the Government originally intended to run a tramway through their grounds for the purpose of bringing up railway material. It was very unfair of the Government not to explain this at the time, and prevent the false impression that had arisen. It only wanted proper explanation why this branch line appeared in the reference book and not on the plan; and why on earth was it not stated? He could absolve the Premier, who probably knew

nothing about it; but the Minister for Works ought to have known all about it. As it was, an injury had been done to the country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS explained that he had not asked for the approval of this branch line as shown in the dotted line on the plans. He had never asked for an extension to the wharves, and did not want it.

Mr. WALSH suggested that the great expense of ascending this height might be saved by making a direct line from Highfields to Toowoomba. Such a course might be of great advantage to the neighbourhood, and better than this new system of climbing up ranges. He threw out this as a suggestion to the Ministry.

Question put and passed.

#### SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the House went into Committee of Supply.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved a vote of £550 on account of Central Board of Health.

Mr. WALSH asked who were the non-official members to whom fees were paid?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY was understood to give the names of the gentlemen, and amongst them those of Captain Simpson, Dr. Hobbs, Dr. O'Doherty, Dr. Bell, Mr. Petrie, and Mr. T. Finney.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked what members received pay?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that the secretary received £100 a-year, and £450 was paid as fees to non-official members.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should like to know how these fees were divided. Among the names mentioned by the Colonial Secretary were some members of the other branch of the Legislature. The committee should have full information upon this point, otherwise they might have to vote honorariums to members of the other branch of the Legislature. He believed that one of the members of the other branch of the Legislature also held a position in the Marine Board, and received payment for his services. Was it right that paid officers of the Crown should be members of that board? It was perfectly absurd on the face of it, that the superior branch of the Legislature should be called to revise a legislative vote passed by the Assembly providing for the emoluments of some of their own members.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he had opposed the constitution of the Board of Health very strongly when it was first proposed by the honourable member for Port Curtis and consented to by the House;

and the honourable gentleman assured him it would be no charge upon the country.

Mr. PALMER denied that he had given any assurance to the honourable gentleman respecting this matter. The Bill was introduced by Dr. O'Doherty, and carried through the House by him. He (Mr. Palmer) believed it was a very good Bill. If the Central Board of Health had been better supported by Ministers who had come into power since, they would have done a vast deal more good; but they had not been half supported. He should like to know how often the Colonial Secretary had sat upon the board, of which he was *ex officio* chairman. He evidently did not know the names of the members.

Mr. MOREHEAD thought honourable members on both sides of the House should give some expression of opinion on this question, because it was something like giving a power of bribery to a Ministry to fee members of the other branch of the Legislature. The propriety of members of that Chamber taking offices of emolument under the Crown was matter of grave consideration. He was very doubtful, if the question were taken into the courts of law, whether their seats would not be declared vacant. It was a very great mistake, almost a crime, that gentlemen in the other branch of the Legislature should be appointed to places of emolument under the Crown.

Mr. FRASER thought that the opinion had frequently been expressed in that House, that it was very unbecoming that honourable members of either House should receive such emoluments. This was a question that ought not to be shirked. He had seen nothing to change the opinion he had always held, and thought that the sooner the House gave a strong expression of opinion on the matter the better.

Mr. GROOM said the question mooted by the honourable member for Mitchell was one of considerable importance. It had formed the subject of a debate in the Parliament of New South Wales, and the Attorney-General of the late Government of that colony, Mr. Dalley, had given it as his opinion that members of the bar holding seats in the Assembly, and who received briefs to prosecute for the Crown on circuit, did not thereby hold an office of profit under the Crown within the meaning of the Constitution Act, and did not forfeit their seats in the Legislature. The Assembly, however, passed a resolution to the effect that members of either House of Parliament acting on commissions appointed by the Government should not receive fees in payment for their services; and if the honourable member for Mitchell would introduce a similar resolution he was prepared to support it. He had long held the opinion that it was an anomaly for members of the Upper House to be

paid servants of the Crown, and to be sitting in judgment on the actions of the Executive. This was made clear the other evening, when, in discussing the Estimates, it transpired that the Committee of Supply was debating the salary of the health officer, who was a member of the Upper House, and who had acted the part of *censor morum* of a Royal Commission appointed by the Governor in Council. He thought this question an important one, and that it should receive attention.

Mr. WALSH said that at the Waterworks Board the same thing occurred. There were actually two members of the other Chamber receiving fifty-two guineas each a-year for their devotion to the interests of the citizens of Brisbane and the Government as members of the Waterworks Board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS explained that the two members of the Waterworks Board just referred to were appointed long before they had any idea of becoming members of the Legislative Council.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Minister for Works did not appear to grasp the position at all which had been taken up by the honourable member for Warrego, by himself (Mr. Morehead), and by the honourable member for Toowoomba. The position was, that it was utterly bad in principle that members of the other branch, or either branch, of the Legislature should be capable of holding offices under the Crown, which, by a side-wind, would be paid for. It was most improper that members of the Upper branch of the Legislature should be receiving emoluments from the Government, and ought to be put a stop to. He also wished for information on another point. The salary of the clerk of the Central Board of Health was put down at £300 a-year. That amount seemed far too large, especially when it was considered that that gentleman was receiving a salary of £500 a-year from another department of the Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he believed the gentleman in question was a supernumerary clerk in the Registrar-General's office, where he did contract work, and earned about £200 a-year. The non-official members of the Central Board of Health received a guinea a sitting.

Mr. WALSH said that members of Parliament who were in receipt of public salaries were liable to be considered as in the pay of the Government, and bound to vote for their measures. There were two gentlemen—the Collector of Customs and the chief medical officer—who had no right whatever to hold seats in the Legislative Council; and there were two or three other gentlemen there who were receiving fees in consequence of offices they held under the Government. Such men could not be independent representatives of the

people, and he wondered that that Chamber did not purge itself of them.

Mr. PALMER said that with reference to the salary of the secretary of the Central Board of Health, the Estimates ought to have shown in a foot-note that that gentleman was also in receipt of £150 a-year as secretary to the Relief Depot. He thought that rather a high sum to pay for the dispensing of £1,000 a-year, at the same time that this officer earned all he received from the Registrar-General's Office.

The COLONIAL TREASURER pointed out that a foot-note of the kind referred to would be in this case undesirable, inasmuch as the two offices might not be held by the same person. The Blue Book would supply the information required.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought some expression of opinion should be given by the Premier on the subject of payment of members of the Upper House.

The PREMIER said it seemed to be supposed that the independence of those members of the Upper House was endangered who were in receipt of the public money for work which they performed. Captain Simpson was on one or two boards, and his independence was very remarkable indeed. Two other members were on the Board of Waterworks before they were nominated to that Chamber. With regard to the general question, that was settled by the Constitution Act, which provided that not more than a certain number of members of the Upper House should be in receipt of Government emoluments. Mr. Thornton was appointed some years ago, in view of the alteration of the tariff, and he had always done his duty independently on

the successive measures which had been brought before him as a member of the Legislative Council. Dr. Hobbs had been for many years connected with the colony, and enjoyed the esteem of the community; and although he held pronounced political opinions, his actions in the Upper House had never been much questioned. The subject as a whole was certainly open to discussion, which could be raised by tabling a resolution for that purpose.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Collector of Customs was a servant of the Government for the time being, and, as such, should not have a seat in either branch of the Legislature. He trusted that the discussion which had arisen on this subject would have its effect, and that a Government would in time be found bold enough to prevent salaried officers from having a seat in the Upper Chamber.

Mr. WALSH said that under the Constitution Act not less than four-fifths of the members of the Legislative Council should be gentlemen not receiving any emolument under the Crown. There were at present twenty-nine members in the Upper House, and of these seven or eight were in receipt of such emolument. That was quite unconstitutional, and it was high time that this Chamber took exception to such a state of things.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Chairman reported progress and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at half-past ten o'clock.