

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 28 AUGUST 1878

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 28 August, 1878.

Questions.—Motion for Adjournment.—Orphanages Bill.—Supply.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. FOOTE asked the Secretary for Public Works—

1. Is the survey of the railway line from Walloon up the Valley of the Brisbane River to Mount Esk completed?—If not, when will the survey be completed?

2. Do the Government intend to include the said railway in the first loan for branch railways?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Miles) replied:—

1. A trial survey to thirty-five miles near Mount Esk has been made, but has not been completed, owing to the death of the surveyor engaged thereon. Arrangements will be made to complete the surveys as soon as possible.

2. The Government not having sufficient information on the subject, are unable to give a decided answer to this question.

Mr. STEVENSON asked the Secretary for Public Works—

If any steps have been taken towards carrying out the survey of a branch railway line between Emerald Downs and Clermont?—If not, when do the Government intend taking any steps in the matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

The Chief Engineer has been advised to arrange for a survey of a line to diverge from the line at some suitable place beyond the Comet River.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. IVORY said he rose for the purpose of calling the attention of the Premier to a matter of some public importance, and he should conclude with a motion. It would be remembered that on the 17th July last when the Estimates connected with the Lunatic Asylum and Reception Houses were under discussion, a promise was extracted from the Premier that he would lay on the table of the House the instructions under which the warder at the Brisbane Reception House acted. His statement was, that he would take care to do so, and to instruct Dr. Hobbs to send in a report. He (Mr. Ivory) took the present opportunity of asking—

The Sergeant-at-Arms here announced a message from His Excellency the Governor.

The SPEAKER informed the House, that he had received a message from the Governor, forwarding the Supplementary Estimates, for 1877-8.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he rose to what was not exactly a question of privilege,

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although it came very close to one. He was perfectly aware that, according to the rules of the House, a message from the Governor interrupted all business, but he thought that it might be done with a little more decorum, and with a little more regard to the dignity of the House. He had never seen it done before as it had been in this House, both to-day and yesterday—the Sergeant-at-Arms interrupting a member in the middle of his speech. Although it was according to the rules of the House that a Governor's message should interrupt all business before the House, he thought it could be done with more decorum, and without interrupting an honourable member in the hasty way in which it had been done yesterday, when the honourable member for Kennedy was stopped in the middle of a sentence, and to-day, when the honourable member for Burnett was treated in the same way.

The SPEAKER said he had endeavoured to arrange that notice should be given to the Sergeant-at-Arms when a messenger arrived, so that he might be introduced at a convenient time; but when a messenger arrived at the door of the House, he did not see that the Sergeant-at-Arms could do otherwise than announce him. The matter might be arranged by intimation being given to the Sergeant-at-Arms before the messenger entered the House, and he could then wait until there was a convenient pause in the business to introduce him.

The PREMIER (Mr. Douglas) said there had been no departure from the ordinary procedure in this case. It was customary when a message from the Governor was announced that all other business should be intercepted. No doubt, it might be convenient to make the arrangement suggested by the Speaker, but he did not agree with the remarks of the honourable gentleman that there had been any departure from the ordinary practice in this instance.

Mr. PALMER said he had been a long time in the House, and had frequently seen the course adopted on these occasions, and it had always been the rule, on a message from the Governor being brought down, for the messenger to wait until it was found convenient to enter. They had had more than two repetitions of this procedure this session, where members were interrupted in this way, and it should be represented that although a Governor's message interrupted all business, it was never intended that it should interrupt a member when addressing the House. It had never been the custom to do so until lately.

Mr. IVORY said, at the time of the interruption, which in the case of a more nervous member might have completely upset him, he was drawing attention to the fact that on the 17th of July last the Premier

promised that he would take care to have the instructions under which the warder at the Brisbane Reception House acted laid on this table, and that he would instruct Dr. Hobbs to send in a report. He thought in a matter of this kind a little more activity might be shown, and his opinion was that it had entirely dropped out of the Premier's mind. He should like to know from that gentleman the position of affairs. They were entitled to know how this Reception House was being conducted, and he thought unwarrantable delay had taken place in the matter. He moved the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said shortly after the debate to which the honourable member had referred, he gave instructions to Dr. Hobbs to report in the terms that he (the Premier) signified on that occasion. He had also visited the Reception House in company with Dr. Hobbs, and had a lengthened conversation with him on the subject, and he thought a written report had been sent in, but he could not speak positively on that point. The honourable member for Burnett spoke to him privately on the matter yesterday, but it escaped his attention this morning, and he did not inquire whether a report had been sent in. However Dr. Hobbs had been instructed to do so, and he would take care to furnish whatever documents there might be in connection with the matter, if there were any.

Mr. J. SCOTT was understood to say that this matter had been referred to several times, and honourable members were entitled to know what the instructions under which this warder acted were.

Mr. PALMER said he would take this opportunity of referring to the petition presented yesterday by the honourable member for West Moreton. He had received two telegrams from the members of the committee who drew up the petition, and he could state that the honourable member made a great mistake in presenting it. The petition was sent to him, asking for his support when the question came before the House, but he was never asked to present it.

Mr. IVORY said, in reply to what had fallen from the Premier, he understood from what had been stated, that there were at present no instructions in force for the guidance of the warder at the Brisbane Reception House, otherwise, he was perfectly confident the House would be in possession of them. He thought it was most improper, after the discussions that had taken place in that House, and the opinions expressed by honourable members on the subject, that no code of instructions should be in existence. One would suppose that Dr. Hobbs was going to rule this Reception House as he pleased, notwithstanding the opinions expressed in that

House or the general opinion of the public. The public wished to know under what system this establishment was conducted, and they were entitled to know it. On the 17th of July, the House was informed that these instructions would be forthcoming, but they were not, and he gathered from that that there was no distinct instructions in possession of the warder, and he maintained that the Government had neglected their duty in not having forced something of the kind from Dr. Hobbs.

Mr. BEATTIE said he might mention that some time after the discussion in question took place he saw Dr. Hobbs, and asked him whether the warder acted without written instructions, and his reply was that there were written instructions given to the warder, who acted up to them. Dr. Hobbs also said the use of the large shower-bath had been discontinued for some time. He thought it was only fair to Dr. Hobbs to state this—that the warder acted under written instructions from him as medical officer.

Mr. THOMPSON said, when this matter was last under discussion, it was understood that they should be furnished with a report and a copy of the instructions, but nothing had been done. The honourable member for Fortitude Valley said there were instructions, and what they wanted was a copy of those instructions to see what they were. Perhaps the Premier would undertake to lay them on the table to-morrow.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

ORPHANAGES BILL.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to make better provision for the establishment and management of asylums for orphans and deserted and neglected children.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL, in moving that it was desirable to introduce the Bill, said it was only right to inform the House that it was not intended to proceed further with it this session, but it was considered desirable that it should be printed and circulated some time before it was proposed to pass it into law.

Question put and passed.

The House then resumed, and the Bill having been read a first time, the second reading was made an Order of the Day for this day fortnight.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. BAILEY said he believed this was the proper time—on going into Committee of Supply—to bring before the House and

the Government any grievance under which any member of the community suffered, and it was a good and wholesome custom. The grievance he had to complain of was one suffered by a man in the lower class of society, a working carpenter in Brisbane. Some time since this man brought an action in the Metropolitan District Court in which he gained a verdict of £25 and £21 costs, having paid a large portion of these costs previous to the action to his solicitor, a Mr. Spencer of Beenleigh. Having gained the action, Mr. Spencer sent him a letter in which he said the action had been gained, that he would have the costs taxed the next week, and when he received them he would send a cheque including the amount of the verdict and expenses. On the 11th of June, 1877, the amount of the verdict was paid by the defendant in the case, and on the 20th the costs were also paid by Mr. Wilson, his solicitor; but Mr. Spencer had from that day to this retained the costs. The plaintiff had since put the matter in the hands of another solicitor, and of course there came another action in the District Court to recover the £21, and he gained that also; but he was still in this difficulty—that this lawyer still retained the costs, and the other lawyer, with a certain *esprit de corps*, did not care to take further action. All that this man desired was that he might have judgment and justice. The man had appealed to the Law Society, but they said that as he had obtained a verdict against this attorney, they could not interfere. A sharp lawyer could easily defend himself in a matter of this kind, by arranging that he should have no goods to seize. As this attorney had before been reprimanded by the Law Society, and compelled to do some sort of justice to his clients, whom he appeared to be robbing, it seemed very hard to allow such a man to remain on the rolls, knowing that he was defrauding his clients. He had applied privately to the Attorney-General about this case, and the Attorney-General said he had no authority. He (Mr. Bailey) wished to know whether a man in this colony should be allowed to be robbed by any roguish attorney, when he had obtained two verdicts against him in the District Court. The man had had to pay all the costs in both cases, and there must surely be some remedy.

Mr. WALSH said he should avail himself of this opportunity to refer again to the way in which the Immigration Act had been carried out by the Government. He had very little to add to what he said yesterday. The same system prevailed during 1877, but in a lesser degree, and the Government had apparently taken advantage of the fact that the matter had not been noticed before to set the Act still further at defiance. The Agent-General's last re-

port showed that during the year 1877, 3,242 adults proceeded to Brisbane against 1,684 adults to the Northern ports—in other words that two immigrants were landed in Brisbane to one in the Northern ports. This showed that throughout the whole of last year this Act was set at naught. The schedule of the Act of 1875 did not repeal the 28th clause of the Act of 1871, which distinctly laid down the *pro rata* way in which immigrants should be landed in the colony. The schedule referred principally to the way in which land-orders were to be dealt with, and repealed certain sections—but not section 28—of the Act of 1871. He would therefore repeat his charge that the Government had during the last two years most flagrantly violated the Act under which they were empowered to bring immigrants into Queensland. This was a matter of considerable importance, and he hoped that such an expression of opinion would be given by honourable members as would compel the Government to pay some little attention to their statutes. He might state, without any breach of faith, that the Premier had told him there were at least four ships at this moment on the sea bound for the Northern ports. He trusted the Premier would also tell them how many were on the sea, bound for Brisbane.

The PREMIER said he was informed by the Immigration Agent that there were four ships at the present time proceeding to the Northern ports, and two to the port of Brisbane. He admitted that there had been a disproportion in numbers in favour of arrivals in Brisbane, and that the Act had been departed from in this respect, in consequence of the necessity of bringing immigrants to a port where they could readily find employment. It had been found by experience that married couples, especially, were not rapidly taken up in the Northern ports, although single men could easily find employment on the goldfields. At times, married couples hung very heavily at Rockhampton. There was no agricultural settlement in the neighbourhood of those towns, and it had been found difficult to maintain immigrants while they were waiting for engagement at some of the Northern ports. At Maryborough immigrants had gone off very well, and were at present rapidly absorbed there. For himself, he might say that no instructions had been given on this point to the Agent-General, and it would be noticed in the report referred to by the honourable member for Warrego, that the Immigration Agent indicated that during the present year it would be scarcely possible to find employment for all the immigrants that might be despatched to the Northern ports. The main object of the Government in bringing immigrants into the colony was to find employment for them. He (the Premier) very much doubted the policy of bringing European immi-

grants direct to the tropics, the transition from an English climate to a climate like that of Townsville being too trying. He had frequently referred to this before, and it was a principle that had been recognised under the Imperial Colonial Regulations. They could not fight against nature, and this fact had no doubt to some effect deterred immigrants from going at once into the tropics, especially when they intended to undertake manual labour immediately on arriving. He could not give any promise, in the interests of immigration, to depart from the present practice, although it was in the option of the House to express its opinion on the subject. He did not think any alteration would be wise at present, the operation of the Act being conducted to the benefit of the public, and in the interests of the immigrants themselves.

Mr. BEOR said he hoped immigrants who were thinking of going North, would not be deterred from doing so by the remarks of the Premier. He spent a considerable portion of last summer in the Northern parts of the colony, and they certainly appeared to him to be equally as bearable as Brisbane at the same period of the year. The trade winds which prevailed there, made the summer climate of Townsville or Bowen absolutely preferable to that of Brisbane. The Premier had asserted that immigrants did not go off well in the North. But, did the Ministry try to make them go off? Did they provide means to make them go off? Did they provide suitable depôts for them? In Bowen, the people had asked over and over again that immigrants might be sent there, and they were still in great want of immigrants there and could not get them. The Northern ports ought to have equal facilities for the obtaining of immigrants as Brisbane had. Not only at Bowen, but at other ports of the North, they could not get immigrants when they wanted them. Means should be taken to give the North its proper quota of immigrants, and to provide depôts for them until they found work, which they could easily do at a much better rate of wages than here.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Rockhampton) said his experience at Rockhampton had been that immigrants always went off remarkably well, and that if far more ships arrived there the demand would be proportionately increased, on account of the enormous demand out west for labour. The Premier had told them that they should not have coloured labour, and now he told them they should not have white labour, which was very hard lines for the unfortunate people living in the North. The great proportion of immigrants ought to be introduced in winter. It was very hard on them to bring them to the colony at any time between the beginning of November and the end of March, and it was

very desirable that they should be brought out during the eight cool months of the year. He hoped the House would insist on the Act being carried out in its integrity.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier had stated that he had always been opposed to the introduction of European immigrants within the tropics. Why did not the honourable gentleman go further, and advocate Separation, so that some justice, at all events, might be done to the North.

The PREMIER: I always have advocated Separation.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had always thought the Premier's pet foible was Federation, not Separation, and he had read articles from his pen showing the benefit which the Australias would derive from federation. He was glad, however, that on the eve of a general election, the Premier had told them that he was an advocate for Separation. Twelve years ago, when managing a station beyond the Thompson River, when times were much more depressed than now, and when not one-third as much country was taken up, all the immigrants that came to Bowen were readily absorbed. If the honourable gentleman had given the House some facts, showing that immigrants were more readily absorbed in Brisbane than in the Northern ports, there might have been some force in his arguments. But all that he had said was, that he was opposed to immigrants going into the northern portions of the colony because he did not think the climate suited them. The climate suited many people who had to live in the North, and the northern climate, to which the Premier had taken so much exception, was in every way as healthy as the climate of Brisbane. He thought this was an insidious design of the Premier's to disseminate Brisbane politics throughout the colony. The honourable gentleman first proposed to acclimatise the immigrant in Brisbane, and then to send him forth to disseminate Brisbane politics from one end of the land to the other. The honourable gentleman had previously expressed his willingness to do all in his power to lead to the employment of immigrants, but he had not yet heard of his having taken any steps to form depôts in the interior, as was suggested. He saw no difficulties in the way of carrying out that design, and if there were any, the honourable gentleman, if he had his heart in the work of benefiting the whole colony, could very easily overcome them.

Mr. J. SCOTT said the Premier admitted there had been some slight departure from the Act. But what were the facts? Last year, there were two immigrants sent to Brisbane to one to the Northern ports; this year, three had come to Brisbane to one to the Northern ports; and he supposed that next year the proportion would have risen to four to one. They

all knew that the Premier had done everything he could, both before and since his assumption of office, to oppose the progress of the North, and nothing else than this could be expected from him. If the Agent-General was to blame for disobeying an Act of Parliament he ought to be removed from his office; and if the Premier, he ought at once to be called to account for his conduct.

Mr. McLEAN said no one could deny that the Act ought to be carried out in its integrity; even the Government would not defend their action on that ground. He happened to know that there was now, and had been for some time past, a great scarcity of labour in the Northern portions of the colony, while there had been a large surplus of labour in the South. The Government could not possibly have had their eyes closed to the fact that there were far more men going about in the Southern portion of the colony, than there was work for. Knowing that, they ought to have taken steps to have had a large proportion of the immigrants sent North. Some time ago immigrants were arriving in Brisbane so rapidly that before the last batch had time to look about for employment, they were driven out of the depôt to make room for the next shipload. Complaints had been made to him by immigrants who had been thus turned out of the depôt, before they had an opportunity of seeking employment. He did not think the Government could be defended in this matter. When the Statute Book set forth that a certain proportion of immigrants should be sent to the Northern portion of the colony, and a certain proportion to the Southern, it was the duty of the Government to see that the Agent-General carried out the Act in its integrity. With reference to the complaint brought before the House by the honourable member for Wide Bay, he thought the Government ought to say whether there was any remedy in such a case.

Mr. STEVENSON said he could endorse all that had been said with regard to the scarcity of labour in the North. The remarks of the Premier with regard to the climate of the North were rather too absurd to be taken notice of. It was a miserable way of getting out of a difficulty for the Premier to say that he had complications about sending immigrants North because the climate was too hot for them. The Premier had taken quite a wrong position in this matter, for he not only admitted that he had departed from an Act of Parliament, but that he would persist in departing from it. That was a position the Premier had no right to take up. Why were Acts of Parliament passed if they were not to be obeyed? The House ought to insist on the provisions of this Act being carried

out. No one who knew the North could say that the immigrants sent there had not gone off well. At Rockhampton, if the immigrants were of the right sort, they were always speedily absorbed, although occasionally there were a few large families kept in the depôt for a week or two, until the father went out to look for employment. No one ever heard of immigrants up North applying for free passes to be sent to New South Wales, as they had done in Brisbane. They had heard that the Government had given free passes to immigrants to go to Dalby on their way to New South Wales. He had himself heard the honourable the Colonial Treasurer say so. There was, however, a greater likelihood of the immigrants who went up North staying in the colony. A great many of those who came to the South took advantage of the Act of Parliament simply to get away to the other colonies, but very few cases of the sort had occurred in the North. No one who knew anything about the North, could dispute that a great scarcity of labour existed there. At the present time, stock-owners in the Central districts—in the Barcoo and Mitchell districts—were paying Kanakas £1 a-week for shepherding.

Mr. IVORY said they all knew that the Premier was of a philanthropical and sentimental turn of mind, but the speech he had made that afternoon had quite astonished them. As had been said by a previous speaker, the honourable gentleman had stopped the North getting coloured labour; he had also put a poll-tax of £10 on Chinese; and now the North was to be deprived of its modicum of white labour. They could all see the reason why this was done. The Premier advocated Separation, and was desirous of breeding as much discontent as possible in the North for the purpose of fostering his crotchet. It was an extraordinary thing to hear the Premier of the colony, who occupied a position where one would suppose he would have the good of the colony at heart, advocating its dismemberment. It was most indecent of the Premier to enunciate such views. With regard to his sentimental freak of letting the immigrants first come to the South, so that they might get acclimatised, and then transporting them to the North, he supposed he would carry it out by establishing an acclimatisation hospital in Brisbane. When at times there were no immigrant vessels coming to the North it was possible that employers might desire to have men from the South. He had tried himself to get immigrants from Brisbane, merely asking that their passage to Maryborough should be paid, but his request had been refused. He failed to see the advantage of the Premier's system of first acclimatising the immigrants in the South; if they were imported to the centres

of population in the South only, it would be absolutely impossible for the people of the North and the interior to hire any number of them. The House, however, had nothing to do with these philanthropical and sentimental views when there was an Act of Parliament providing that ship for ship should be sent to the North and South, and the Premier had no business to override that Act in the way that he had.

Mr. GRIMES said there must be some relation between the demand for labour in a district, and the number of immigrants imported to supply it. Whatever might be the circumstances now in the North, it was not long since that there was a plethora of labour there. Immigrants had been sent from the North to the South at the expense of the State, sometimes; and when such a state of things existed, it was far better that immigration should be temporarily stopped to those districts than that the country should be burdened with the extra expense of transporting them to another part. If there had been an alteration, as stated, and there was now an unlimited demand for labour in the North, the Premier would no doubt see that it was supplied. He was pleased to hear from the honourable member for Bowen, that the climate of the North was so agreeable. He knew nothing personally about the North, but he had always understood it was so hot, that the European constitution could not stand laborious work, and that on that ground Kanaka labour was advocated. Now, however, he heard from the honourable member for Bowen that the climate was so salubrious that white men could do labourious work in it. He hoped the honourable member would for the future throw his heart and soul into the advocacy of the system favoured by Southern members, that the country should be developed by their own countrymen. There was another way in which the difficulty about the importation of immigrants might be met. If the North would not take those imported to it and the South must, then immigration to the South must be temporarily stopped. They could not stand hard-and-fast by an Act of Parliament in this matter, and if immigration was to be carried on, it must be by sending the people to where there was most employment for them, which must be sometimes in the North, and sometimes in the South. He should heartily support any system which regulated the supply of labour, so that the immigrants were sent to the districts where they could find employment.

Mr. PALMER said it was a great pity that some honourable members would not confine themselves to subjects about which they knew something. The honourable member for Bulimba admitted that he knew nothing about the North, and then

went on to say that he always understood it was so hot that it was only fit for Kanaka labour. The only labour which honourable members acquainted with the subject said white men could not do in the North was trashing sugar-cane, which was a very different thing.

Mr. GRIMES: Which is not necessary.

Mr. PALMER said the honourable member knew nothing about sugar-growing. It was necessary to trash cane if it was meant to make good sugar, or to get it up to any density. The honourable member had also argued that they should not be ruled by the Act of Parliament, which said distinctly that immigrant ships should go alternately to Brisbane and the Northern ports. How dared the Premier break this law, as he had dared to break others, because he happened to be backed up by a servile majority. It was not the first time that he had tried to set the law on one side. Why was he not made Dictator at once? He broke the law in another way. He had said he would continue not sending immigrants to the North. Well, all he (Mr. Palmer) could say was, that he deserved condign punishment. As long as he was Premier he should be the first man to obey the law, and not set it at defiance. He could tell him that the North was pining for white labour. A fortnight ago he received a letter from his manager, informing him that it was two months since a man applied for work, and that they wanted men for all descriptions of labour; yet, the Premier said he would not send white labour to the North. He broke the law in a tyrannical way by placing a restriction upon the importation of Kanaka labour, never intended by the Act, and which prevented the residents of the northern interior getting it; he kept that kind of labour for his pets on the coast. How long would the House put up with this tyranny? Years ago he (Mr. Palmer) told him that his Liberalism, when in power, consisted of gross tyranny, and he never had occasion to alter his opinion; and he could not understand how his colleagues permitted him to carry on in the way that he was. The law about the proportion of immigrants to be sent North and South was clear and simple, and the Premier had no right to break it, but should obey it. What did he do on a recent occasion, when the market was overcrowded at the time the vessel arrived at a Northern town? It was well known that further North there was plenty of employment, but because the port of arrival was surfeited, the vessel was taken to Brisbane instead of being sent further North. Everything was centralised in Brisbane. Any member who had any practical knowledge of the Western, Central, and Northern interiors must know that they were actually wasting away for the want of labour.

They could not get white labour. Had the Premier made a single movement to carry out his pledge of last session to form depôts in the interior? It was almost sickening to have to talk about these things; but so long as the Premier had a miserable majority of one, he would set law and justice at defiance. The day of reckoning and retribution would come, however. The honourable member for Warrego deserved the thanks of the House and the country for bringing up the question. If the Premier dared to break the law in one direction, he would do so in any other when he found it convenient; but he hoped the country would not submit to despotism from any man or set of men living.

Mr. GRIMES wished to explain that he never gave any opinion as to the climate of the North, and that he was simply quoting the opinion of the honourable member for Bowen.

Mr. BEOR begged to state that he did not accept any explanation from the honourable member for Bulimba as to what he might have said.

Question put and passed.

The House went into Committee of Supply.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Miles), a sum of £5,300 was granted for roads and bridges and general votes, Maranoa and Western districts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum of £9,785 be granted for roads in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts.

Mr. WALSH said the Wide Bay district was as important as any in the colony, and he could not understand why so little provision was made for its roads. Its wants were mingled with the requirements of the Burnett district in the Estimates, but still there was a spirit of injustice or neglect clearly manifest. He protested against the small provision for the various farming roads, and regretted that the honourable member for Wide Bay was not present. In comparison with the votes for East Moreton, the district was unjustly treated in the extreme. It was essentially necessary that the many roads diverging from Maryborough to the various farming settlements should be attended to, and he was sorry to see that the honourable member for Maryborough was not in a better position to advocate the cause of his constituents, and those who came to Maryborough with their produce. He charged the Government with acting unjustly towards the Wide Bay district and the town of Maryborough, and protested against the estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Does the honourable member object to the items as excessive?

Mr. WALSH said the honourable gentleman, with the skill which he possessed, was attempting to distort his words. He had

no doubt that the honourable gentleman had seen the mistake he had made regarding the framing of the estimates for Wide Bay, and was now trying to turn the whole matter into ridicule; it was not the first time he had so dealt with his colleague and his colleague's constituents.

Mr. IVORY said he observed that the wants of settlers in the neighbourhood of Bundaberg were not sufficiently attended to. There was a large community settled there, and to a large extent the settlement was in dense scrubs; there could be no doubt that in such instances there was greater necessity to enable the farmers to bring their produce to market than when the settlements were in open forest country. So little had been put down for Bundaberg that the Minister for Works would be only doing a gracious thing to place £1,000 on the Supplementary Estimates for the farm roads of that locality, especially as two sums of £3,000 each had been voted for farm roads on the Darling Downs. With regard to the road from Barambah to Kilkivan and Gympie, he wished to give the Minister for Works some information which had been supplied to him. He understood that the road now being made was over a bad range; it was shorter by a mile or two than the old road, but was absolutely impassable unless people travelled with two or three teams, so that they could "double-bank." He was informed that the old road over the Kilkivan Range, although longer, was a better and more practicable road for dray traffic, and ought to be made the main highway. A large amount of settlement was taking place upon Barambah, and settlers there were not, as a rule, possessed of strong teams, and were frequently stuck up by the dividing range; whereas, if a little money were spent upon the old track, they could travel with ease and safety.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, a sum of £3,750 was granted for approaches to ferries, bridges, and general votes, Wide Bay and Burnett district.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum of £2,765 be granted for salaries and contingencies, Central division.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £3,850 be granted for roads in the Rockhampton district.

Mr. WALSH asked whether the first item "Rockhampton district," referred to roads, bridges, or salaries?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was for roads in and around that locality, and the next item was for roads around Rockhampton.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £1,150 be granted for roads in the St. Lawrence district.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £8,050 be granted for roads in the districts of Gladstone, Clermont, Springsure, Blackall, Aramac, and for general votes.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would call the attention of the Minister for Works to the fact that there was no sum on the Estimates for the formation of a road from Emerald Downs Railway Terminus to Blackall. There would be an enormous amount of traffic there, but no road had yet been made. He was quite ready to accept a promise from the Minister for Works that a sum for the purpose would be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates, as he was unwilling to go in for the objectionable log-rolling process of tabling a motion himself. He would further point out that the sum of £1,000 for the whole water-supply of the Central district was quite inadequate. The honourable member for Leichhardt would no doubt be prepared to bear out his statement that a larger expenditure was not only advisable, but indispensable. The honourable the Minister for Works himself knew perfectly well that there were large tracts of country in the Central divisions through which, even in ordinary seasons, long stages had to be made without water. He felt assured that if he tabled a motion for £10,000 for the purpose, he would have the support of the committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the honourable member for Mitchell had the advantage of him with respect to the district he represented, as he (the Minister for Works) did not know how that district was situated with regard to water. But he knew that large sums of money had been expended on the storage of water in the Warrego district, and that on two occasions the road overseer had laid out reservoirs and dams on tracks leading to sheep stations, and in one case, a reservoir was made alongside a squatter's sheep station. There might, perhaps, be the necessity in the Mitchell district, stated by the honourable member; but he could not promise to place any additional sum on the Supplementary Estimates, as the revenue would not admit of it. An additional £100 had been already placed on the estimate for Blackall.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was not to be understood as pleading the cause of the pastoral tenants. He was speaking in the interest of working men, who often were compelled to go on foot for many miles without water. Numerous instances had occurred in which men had died on the main track from want of water. The rich man had his horses and could ride long stages, and it was therefore in the interest of the working man he was speaking. If the Minister for Works did make water storages, he ought not to allow them to be monopolised by the flocks of squatters. The honourable member for Maranoa could

state that in the Gregory and Mitchell districts, away from the main watercourses, there were long stages of forty and fifty miles where there was no permanent water. On those grounds he (Mr. Morehead) asked the Minister for Works to supply water in those districts, and if the honourable gentleman did not put a sum on the Supplementary Estimates, he himself should give notice of motion asking that a sum might be granted, so that the wants of the travelling public, the rich man or the poor man, might be fairly provided for.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not care a straw whether the honourable member put his motion on the paper or not. He (the Minister for Works) knew—and the country knew also, that nearly the whole of the North and South Gregory districts had been taken up as dry country at nominal rents, and now the honourable member wished to compel the country to water squatters' runs. But he would be no party to it. He believed that a great many false declarations had been made over that country. The honourable member might bring down his motion to store water for squatters' flocks, but he (the Minister for Works) would not ask the House to consent to anything of the sort.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that a more disgraceful misrepresentation was never made by a Minister of the Crown or any member of this House. He did not ask that water should be stored for squatters' flocks, and the fact of the country being dry was one of his reasons for asking that water should be stored along the main roads. The Minister for Works knew that the main road was not the property of the squatter, but that for half-a-mile on each side of it the country was the property of the public, and anyone could drive cattle or sheep along it. As to the pastoral tenants, they were as a rule quite capable of storing water for themselves; and he was not going into a discussion about false declarations, as the honourable member probably knew more about it than he did. The question he had raised was quite irrespective of how, why, or in what manner the country was taken up. There was a considerable amount of traffic on the roads through the district; the postal system had been extended towards the Western frontier, and the supply of water along the line was barely sufficient to enable the mails to run during dry seasons. There seemed to be a kink in the intellect of the Minister for Works which led him to distort every statement made by honourable members on the Opposition side of the House. He (Mr. Morehead) contended that it was the duty of the Government, on the main roads of the colony running through dry country, to provide sufficient storage of water to prevent loss of life. He believed he had the sympathy of the

committee on that point, and he should take an early opportunity of testing it.

Mr. HALY said he had never heard such a miserable argument as the clap-trap of the Minister for Works about squatters. No one would think of such a thing as asking the Government to supply water to a squatter's run, and to talk so was an electioneering dodge. Water along the main roads, so that people could travel, was what was wanted. During the last twelve months no less than £20,000 had been paid into the Treasury through one land office from the Gregory district for dry country and wet country together, and it was the duty of the Government and of the country to see that the roads through such a district were supplied with water, so that men travelling did not lose their lives. He knew of twenty seven cases in which men had perished along the road from Blackall to the Western part of the colony. Perhaps the honourable the Minister for Works did not know that. It was not the squatter who lost his life, but the poor man with his swag on his back. The Minister for Works had tried to blind the committee by saying that the water was wanted for squatters' runs; but no squatter would have the audacity, after taking up a run as dry country, to come down and asked the committee to put water on it. No man in his senses would do such a thing, and it was not likely the Minister for Works believed it himself. He could assure the committee that owing to the miserable mismanagement of the Government, the South Australian people could land flour at the Herbert River cheaper than the Queensland merchants could place it at Blackall. In fact, in the far West the people called the Parliament a committee, and said it did not deserve the name of a Parliament. He himself was ashamed to belong to it, when he saw how the country was misgoverned. It was disgraceful to see the way in which land was being taken up in the West. It was not the honest man, nor the squatter who was willing to put his flocks upon the land, but it was the land jobber who made false declarations; and it was no wonder that the people out West called the Parliament which allowed such a state of things a committee. If the honourable the Minister for Works would go to the West he would see for himself that the way in which the country there was misgoverned was a disgrace to Parliament and to Queensland.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said his argument had been called miserable, because he had refused to spend public money for squatters and their flocks. It used to be said that the honourable member for the Leichhardt had salt on the brain, but since his trip out West, it appeared as though he had water on the brain. As soon as the

honourable member arrived in Brisbane, he had waited on him (the Minister for Works) and urged him to get a reservoir constructed for the storage of water. A petition had previously been sent by the people of that locality, and he (the Minister for Works) had applied to the Engineer of Roads for a report. The report stated that there was a difference of opinion; two places were named, and the Engineer himself preferred the J.C. Waterhole. One of the places named would cost £1,000 and the other £500. The honourable member said he preferred the £500, and he (the Minister for Works) upon that information asked the Colonial Treasurer to place the sum of £500 on the Supplementary Estimates for the purpose of constructing the reservoir. He did not know what the honourable member had to complain of. Only to-day he had received applications from the West for three boats to cross the Diamantina, and Thompson Rivers, and some other river. It did not appear, therefore, that water was so very scarce.

Mr. THOMPSON said the object of the Minister for Works should be to get his Estimates through; but he seemed to have a second object in view, namely, to make speeches to his constituents. It was hard to understand what his conversation with the honourable member for Leichhardt had to do with the committee.

Mr. WALSH said he had never before seen a Minister with such a random, reckless, and he might say ignorant, manner of carrying on his duties as the Minister for Works. His statement about the applications for boats was a most extraordinary one. Surely it was a bad illustration, because money had been only lately granted for dams and wells in West Moreton, while there were hundreds of boats in use on the River Brisbane. Again, the Minister for Works had delayed the passage of his estimates by uttering those slanders respecting the squatters of this country. Without rhyme or reason, the honourable member said that certain persons were in the habit of taking up dry unwatered country, and making false declarations in doing so. Such conduct was utterly unworthy of a Minister, unless he knew what he stated was a fact, and was prepared to prove it and intended to act upon it. Under no other circumstances should he make such statements against the character of the people and of the colony itself; as they would be most injurious, not only to the character, but also to the prosperity of the colony. What would men living at Home and in the Southern colonies say when they read that a Minister of the Crown stated that the lands of the colony had been taken up by parties through false declarations? It was unjust, wanton, and unwise, for a Minister to indulge in such conduct. It appeared as though the hon-

ourable gentleman only held his seat on condition that, as a squatter, he should make daily charges against his fellow-squatters. Because an honourable member asked for water-supply to prevent loss of life—and it was stated that twenty-seven human lives had been lost for want of it—the honourable gentleman got up, and, without proof of his statements or necessity for making them, maligned the whole colony by saying that the country was taken up by certain men under false declarations, and then contradicted his own statement by saying that the very same men wanted the Government to make water storage for their own use. Supposing that the country taken up was unwatered, it would be made much more valuable if water storages were made than if left unwatered. Were they not crowding people upon lands where there were no roads for the people to take their produce to market? Could not the argument as well be used, that because people had taken up lands where there were no roads, therefore no roads should be made for them?

Mr. HALY said he could set the honourable the Minister for Works right about the £500. A petition was sent down by the people of the district, asking that a reservoir might be made for the sake of people travelling for the purpose of stocking the country. It was, therefore, no favour asked. The residents said the reservoir would cost £1,000, and he (Mr. Haly) said, although most of the people were opposed to him, that he thought if £1,000 could not be granted, it would be possible, by going about two miles and a-half further off the road, to find another place where a reservoir might be made for a smaller sum. He only wanted to show the honourable gentleman what was taking place, and defied him to prove that flour could not be landed from South Australia on the Herbert cheaper than it could be landed at Blackall at the present moment. This must be attributed to the bad roads and inefficient water-supply, and nothing else. If it were not for the three rivers, the Thompson, the Diamantina, and the Barcoo, he would not have got £20,000 nor 20,000 pence for that country in the West. There were about 100 miles of country that they could never travel over without adequate water-supply, and he had been assured that the people there were likely to suffer from floods once or twice a-year. Though there had been no rain for eighteen months, the creeks were flooded from the rains in the far-off tropical regions. He wished the Government had a little more water on the brain, since they were so fond of the expression, and if he were the Government, he should be ashamed of putting people upon land where, as was described by an honourable member last night,

they had to go fifteen miles for a kettle of water. It was the business of the Government, if they enticed people upon the land, at least to supply them with water. If he were a member of the Government, he would no more think of inviting people on the land of the colony without supplying them with that primary essential—water—than he would of asking them to walk into the fire. This was the Government that called itself Liberal, while it did not know how to be Liberal, and the sooner the country understood that this Liberal Government refused a supply of water the better for the country and the sake of humanity. He could assure honourable members that if the honourable gentleman, or the Ministry which he had heard called the Queen-street committee, did not take care, they would lose all the traffic of that splendid country to the West. He never saw better country for sheep and cattle, and, if they did not mind, the whole of the trade there would go to South Australia. The South Australian people were making every effort to meet the views of the inhabitants; and yet, if an honourable member came and asked for £500 from the Government, he was told that if people took up unwatered country, they must suffer the consequences. He had not asked the honourable gentleman to grant any favour, and his only desire was to give him the result of his experiences. He hoped the honourable gentleman would not go out of his road again to talk about unwatered country and false declarations. Let him stick to his roads and bridges, and he would then get on more rapidly with his estimates.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Rockhampton) asked whether this item of £800 for the Blackall district was intended for making a road between Emerald Downs and Blackall?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the money was to be appropriated to that purpose.

Mr. MACFARLANE said it was a very miserable sum for any such work. It was to be expended upon 180 miles of road through new country, and that was at the rate of about £4 per mile. He understood that the railway line would be finished to Emerald Downs by March or April next year. Yet this was the whole sum granted to bring the traffic of a vast extent of country to the line. It was quite insufficient, and he hoped the committee would insist upon a larger sum being put upon the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. MACROSSAN, referring to the question of water-supply, hoped the Government would see its way to buy one diamond drill for the miners, and another for water-supply. It would be much more effective and cheaper to use a diamond drill in the interior for the purpose of obtaining water, than to build dams which would cost a

large sum of money, but which would afterwards not hold water. A diamond rock drill would be more useful both to the farmers and pastoral lessees in the interior as well as to the travellers along the road, than the present proposed expenditure. Should the Government make the experiment—it was worth trying—and money spent on such an experiment, in which there were ninety-nine chances in favour of success, would be better than a continual expenditure upon useless claims. With regard to the statement of the Minister for Works respecting people in the interior who obtained land under false declarations, he would ask why did not the Government interfere? Why did they not enforce the law, take the land from the men who made false declarations, and punish them?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said that he would inform the honourable member for Kennedy that there was a sum upon the Supplementary Estimates for the purchase of a boring apparatus for discovering water. As to taking up land in the interior by false declarations, there was no need to go as far away as that, for it was done on the Darling Downs even to this day.

Mr. IVORY said it was not the first he had heard of these false declarations. A few nights ago he made some remarks respecting the system pursued in the West and North-west, but was now inclined to believe that the Minister for Works was somehow implicated in the transactions. He (Mr. Ivory) knew the honourable gentleman was interested in runs in the far West, and should not be surprised from what he had heard, that the honourable gentleman was himself involved in some of these little run-jobbing arrangements, about which he had been so indignant. Had the honourable gentleman had his toes trodden upon because he did not get the particular piece of country he required? It was a very extraordinary thing that a member of the Government should, occupying the place he did, and being acquainted with those false declarations, not insist that action should be taken upon them by the Government. It was understood last year that a commissioner was to be sent out to inquire into this matter, but now they had the Minister for Works getting up, making these statements, and showing that there must be something rotten indeed in the Government which possessed this information, but took no action with regard to it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS wished to deny point-blank that he had ever applied for any of this country. What country he did get there, he had bought and paid for from speculators who might or might not have obtained it by false declarations; but of that he knew nothing and could say nothing. That these false declarations

were habitually made, was a notorious fact. It was known to everybody that there were two cases tried at Blackall a short time ago; an honourable member went up to prosecute in a case of false declaration, and two individuals were committed. What was the use, then, of honourable members saying he was making charges when the thing was a matter of common notoriety?

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Minister for Works should confine himself to the business of his department, instead of going into a number of accusations which might or might not be true. The argument was raised by himself (Mr. Morehead) about water storage along the main roads in the interior of the colony, and the Minister for Works got up and, instead of giving some reasonable explanation of the antagonism exhibited towards his proposal, talked about false declarations and so forth, which had nothing to do with water-supply or the saving of human life along these trunk roads. What the honourable gentleman had been talking about concerned the Minister for Lands.

Mr. IVORY said he really did think that, as the Minister for Works had such an amount of information with regard to these false declarations, he ought to call upon the Minister for Lands to state to the committee whether he was in possession of the details of any cases such as had been described by his colleague. The committee ought not to go further with the Estimates until this was satisfactorily explained. He (Mr. Ivory) was very anxious to proceed with business, and get the session over as soon as possible; but it was a serious matter when the Minister for Works said himself that he had bought land of people who got it by false declarations.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I deny point-blank the truth of what the honourable member says. I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. IVORY said: Then, if that were so, he need not proceed further with his argument. But he, and no doubt other members, understood the honourable gentleman to say that he had so purchased land. He (Mr. Ivory) would now merely call the attention of the Minister for Lands to what his colleague had stated. If the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Works would lay their heads together about this matter, and the latter would tell the former all he knew about the subject, no doubt the colony would gain a great deal by the information imparted.

Mr. HALY said he hoped the House would not go into the question of false declarations, else the business of the country would not be proceeded with for some time. If that question were once entered into, he for one should not be satisfied with the little he knew, but should insist that a

thorough inquiry should be made, and a committee formed to inquire into and put down the system. The Minister for Works should not throw stones at honourable members, because it might be discovered that he, who was one of them, lived in a glass house.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he might be permitted, with reference to these false declarations, to state that there were several cases before him at the present time in which charges were made that country alleged to have been stocked had not been stocked, and that the applications for licenses and leases had been backed up by false declarations. In these cases, he was making investigations, and he could promise the committee that he would use the powers of the Act in such a way as he was authorised to do in enforcing the law. The honourable member for Leichhardt ought to say nothing about the Minister for Works bringing charges, because the honourable member himself, when he returned from the West, made a statement to him which was most startling in its character, and told him persons were making false declarations — to use his own expression — as thick as blackberries; and the honourable member further said that these persons did not mind how many declarations they made, so long as they got the country. That was making a very damaging statement against owners of country in the West. He (the Minister for Lands) told the honourable member that he would act if he received special information, and invited the honourable member to give special information; but the honourable member declined to give it. He had assailed the owners of the country, and then declined to give any definite information, but told him (Mr. Garrick) that he must find out for himself. He had only further to say, that he had endeavoured to find out for himself, and to use the powers of the Act to their fullest extent.

Mr. IVORY said the member for Leichhardt was very straightforward in what he did. He became possessed during his travels of certain facts, and drew the attention of the Minister for Lands to them on his return; and the honourable gentleman, acting up to the true character of the present Ministry, required the member for Leichhardt to give pointed information, in other words, to be an informer. But the honourable member very properly refused to do anything of the kind. He drew the attention of the Ministry to certain matters which were taking place, and of course it was the duty of the Minister to inquire further into them. That false declarations were being made—that country was being taken up in the West and far North-west upon declarations which, if not positively false, were evasive—

was now no longer to be denied. He recommended the Minister for Lands to imitate the conduct of the Attorney-General in another matter, and if he could not get hold of these persons in one way to try another. The fact remained that lands were being taken up westward in a grossly dummmying way. A mob of cattle or sheep was taken across the country, and a declaration was made that upon a certain day a certain portion of country was stocked; then the following day another portion of country would be stocked by the same mob of cattle or sheep and another declaration made, and so on from day to day in the same way. He (Mr. Ivory) would like to see some system whereby people could jump that country in the same way as the gold-miners could jump a claim which had not been worked according to the Act; and believed that if the Minister for Lands showed energy, and appointed one or two special commissioners to investigate the matter, he would find that there was a great deal more of this kind of work going on in the interior than he imagined.

Mr. HALY said he wished to inform the House what he did in reference to this business with the Minister for Lands. When he was out West he saw that false declarations were made, and being made, and that country was held under them. As soon as he came to Blackall he telegraphed to the Minister for Lands such information as would lead him to know what was being done; and, to the best of his remembrance, the telegram ran in these words:—"I travelled over thirty-seven miles of well-watered frontage, by twenty miles back, and there was not a beast on it. If I occupy this country, can I claim it, or will it be treated as a forfeited run?" The answer he (Mr. Haly) got was, that if there was a license granted, he could not occupy the land. He knew there was a license granted, and told the Minister, when he came down to Brisbane, that he only sent the telegram to let him know what was going on. He knew that, according to the land law, the country must be treated as a forfeited run. He told the Minister, in his private office, what was being done, and that there were some people out there who thought no more of making a false declaration than of drinking a pot of tea, and he was sorry to say there were many men in that Western country who made enormous fortunes by making false declarations. If there was a select committee appointed, he would tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He was not ashamed to do that; but he as an informer he never would. If the Minister for Lands would tell him that he could get hold of this country, he would have no objection to give the information; and to go further and jump the land himself. But

honourable members knew very well that if a man gave such information to the Government the Government got the advantage of it. It was a miserable law under which the Government got all the profit, and the man who occupied the country, and was threatened with law-suits and all kinds of trouble, got nothing. He, therefore, was not the man to undergo all those annoyances for the sake of putting a few pounds in the pocket of the Government. But if he saw a chance of getting any benefit by it, he would very soon take up the country.

Question—That £8,050 be granted—put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving £2,675, salaries and contingencies in connection with roads in the Northern division, said he withdrew the salary of one clerk, £156, so that the amount now asked for was all that would be required. The clerk in question had been transferred to another office.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved £19,400 for roads and bridges in the following districts:—Bowen, Burke, Cardwell, Cape Goldfield, Charters Towers, Cook, Hodgkinson, Mackay, Ravenswood, Townsville; and general votes (subdivision).

Mr. WALSH called the attention of the committee to the fact that there were eleven districts through which this vote was intended to make roads and bridges. He had no doubt that each of these districts was larger and equal in importance to East Moreton, and yet only £19,000 was all that was asked for them, while £35,000 was voted for East Moreton. That was the way this Brisbane Government prepared their Estimates; and he wished it to go forth through the length and breadth of the land that, while one pet district got £35,000, these eleven districts, which certainly contained a thousand times in distance the amount of roads in East Moreton, and which were ten times more important, had little more than one-half that amount. He presumed the only excuse the Premier could offer for this was that these districts were situated in such latitude that it would be wrong to send people there to improve the roads in the same way that it was wrong to send immigrants there. He could warn honourable members who supported the Government in these iniquitous Estimates, that a day of reckoning would come and the tide would turn against them.

Mr. IVORY thoroughly agreed with every word uttered by the last speaker. It was perfectly absurd that such an enormous amount of territory should get such a small modicum of expenditure, more especially when they compared it with the amount voted for the solitary district of East Moreton. He supposed the Premier's

sentimental ideas and fine feelings got the better of him in this matter, and he thought it would be cruelty to call upon the white race to construct roads within the tropics.

Mr. MACROSSAN said if the honourable member for Warrego had said that some of the eleven districts for which this money was proposed to be voted were four or five times as large as East Moreton, he would have been nearer the truth. The Cook district and the Burke district were each several times larger than East Moreton, and the whole of these districts together amounted to more than one-third of the whole colony, and yet all that was proposed to be voted for them was £22,000, which included the expenses of management as well. He would call attention to the fact that it was utterly impossible for one engineer to do justice to the expenditure of money in those districts. He had to travel over an extent of country five times that of Victoria, and under those circumstances it was impossible for one man to do his duty even to his own satisfaction. He had a few district inspectors under him, but these were inadequate, and more were required to see that the money voted was properly spent. He was sorry the honourable member for Cook was not present, because he was sure that honourable member would assist him in the matter to which he was about to refer. £3,000 was put down for "roads from the Hodgkinson to Cairns and Port Douglas." Now, they would all remember that a very large amount of money was expended on the road from Cairns to the Hodgkinson about twelve or eighteen months ago, and a very small expenditure took place on the road from Port Douglas, and yet in spite of the large expenditure in the one place and small expenditure in the other, the traffic had entirely gone on the Port Douglas road where the small expenditure took place. For one ton of provisions that went to the Hodgkinson from Cairns it was safe to say that ten went from Port Douglas, nearly all the traffic being on the road from that port. What he asked the Minister for Works to do was this, that as this £3,000 was too small an amount for the two roads, he should spend it, or the greater part of it, on the Port Douglas road, where the greatest amount of traffic existed. By a reasonable amount of expenditure on the Granite Range, between Port Douglas and the Hodgkinson, the road could be shortened a good many miles. Even now empty teams came down that way, but loaded teams had to make a detour round the range which caused an extra journey of a day or a day and a-half. He knew the honourable member for Cook had been requested to urge this proposal on the Government, and if he were present, no doubt he would take the course he (Mr. Macrossan) was

now taking. He wished the Minister for Works to make a statement that the greater portion of this £3,000 would be spent on the Port Douglas road. He believed the Attorney-General had received information from one of the judges to the effect that Cairns was almost deserted, and anyone who read the Northern papers must be aware of the fact. He therefore thought it would be inexpedient to spend a large sum of money on the road from there, especially when all the traffic was on the other, which was also a better natural road. The great difference that existed between the two roads was the amount of scrub to be encountered. On the Port Douglas road the scrub was only one-fifth or one-sixth the extent of the scrub on the Cairns road. The people of the Hodgkinson did not care which port they got their goods from, their only interest being to get them from the place from which they could be brought quickest and cheapest, and for that reason they preferred Port Douglas. The honourable the Colonial Treasurer, when up North, stated, in reply to a deputation of Port Douglas people, that time would decide which of the two places would stand; and, according as time decided, he was pledged to support Port Douglas if it commanded a larger amount of traffic than the other place. He (Mr. Macrossan) therefore now asked that honourable gentleman to support him in urging this demand upon his colleagues.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed the road from Port Douglas which went by the name of the "Granite Gap" was the best road. Mr. Murphy, Cobb and Co's manager up North, called upon him yesterday, and gave him some very valuable information in connection with this road; he said it had the largest amount of traffic, and £500 would put it in thoroughly good order. He was much obliged to Mr. Murphy—who had been a long time in Cobb and Co.'s service, and had travelled over almost every road in the colony—for his information, for he was sure he could not have a better authority. He (Mr. Miles) should take good care that whatever money was spent was spent on that road.

Mr. STEVENSON said he found that only £250 was put down for the Burke district, and that was for branch roads between the reefs and Georgetown, so that the whole pastoral district of Burke was utterly ignored. There was not a single penny for the roads between Normanton and the Cloncurry, Normanton and the Leichhardt River, or the Flinders River. What had the Burke people done that they should be entirely ignored in this way?

Mr. MACROSSAN asked the Minister for Works if Mr. Murphy meant that £500 would be sufficient for the whole road be-

tween Port Douglas and the Hodgkinson, or simply for the Granite Gap?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Granite Gap.

Mr. MACROSSAN said Mr. Murphy no doubt meant that £500 would be sufficient to make the Gap available for through traffic, but there were fifty or sixty miles of road besides that which had to be attended to, and he was sure that nearly the whole of the £3,000 would be required to put the road in a proper state for the next wet season.

Mr. BEOR said it was somewhat disheartening to contemplate that no immediate good could be obtained by pointing out the great discrepancy between the amounts voted for the Southern portion of the colony and the Northern portion, and they could only hope that in the future an improvement would be made in the manner in which the funds of the colony were dealt out for road purposes. With reference to the road from Port Douglas to the Hodgkinson, he thought the people at Port Douglas had shown an amount of energy and enterprise which entitled them to some consideration, when they alone asked that a fair amount of assistance might be given to them in order to enable them to have a fair chance of competing for the trade of the Hodgkinson. With regard to the Mackay roads, last week he brought forward a motion asking for a sum to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the improvement of roads which were the chief means of access from the port to the interior. Upon that occasion he stated that the municipality of Mackay was entitled to some consideration on the ground that they derived little or no revenue at all from the wharves in that town. Afterwards the Treasurer—as he (Mr. Beor) understood him, and so he was reported in *Hansard*, so that he presumed that he was not incorrect—said that he knew of his own knowledge that the municipality of Mackay derive a large revenue from the wharves.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. BEOR said it was so reported in *Hansard*. He (Mr. Beor) stated that the municipality of Mackay derived little or no revenue from the wharves, and the Colonial Treasurer replied—according to his impression and the report in *Hansard*—that it derived a large revenue from those wharves; therefore, they had no right to ask the House to assist them in repairing the roads referred to. Since that debate, he had received a telegram from the Mayor of Mackay to the effect that the Colonial Treasurer's statement was incorrect, that the wharves, except at the ends of the streets, were private property, and that the revenue derived by the municipality from these wharfages last year was under £5. He had received similar information from other sources, and

the Mackay correspondent of one of the Brisbane newspapers had sent down a telegram to the same effect. This ought to be a warning to Ministers to make themselves acquainted with facts before contradicting honourable members who were endeavouring to do what was right by their constituencies and the country. It was due to himself to make this explanation, because the position of the Colonial Treasurer naturally gave a considerable weight in the House to his assertions. It was for the committee to decide which statement was right and which was wrong. If the Colonial Treasurer thought to use his position to contradict the correct assertions of private members, it would be no credit either to himself or to the Ministry to which he belonged.

¶ The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was glad the honourable member for Bowen had afforded him an opportunity of setting himself right on this matter. He still held that the statement he made on the former occasion was correct. It was not made in contradiction to the honourable member, but to show that there were no grounds why an expenditure of the kind asked for should be made within the municipality of Mackay. One of the honourable member's arguments was based on the fact, that the large produce of the neighbourhood cut up the streets on its way to the wharves, paid nothing to the local revenue, and that the municipality were therefore unable out of their own resources to keep the streets in order. He (the Colonial Treasurer) then pointed out that the revenue accruing from the wharfages did not go into the Consolidated Revenue, but was received by the municipality; but he did not state, and his speech would not bear the construction put upon it by the honourable gentleman, that it derived either a large or small revenue from this exportation. He never said, nor imagined the House could understand him to say, that the municipality collected wharfage on private wharves. The municipality did collect wharfage upon the Government embankments which ran at the foot of several streets, and alongside which vessels were occasionally berthed. Not only that, but they collected wharfage upon a special Government wharf at the end of Brisbane street. This embankment, on which a large amount of public money had been expended, ran past the end of five streets. He contended, therefore, that he made no mistake in the matter, and that he was perfectly justified in taking up the position he did. He was willing that the fullest investigation should be made into his assertions, which could only end in fortifying the position he took up. He would take the opportunity of saying that he objected to having words put into his mouth

which he never uttered. Earlier in the evening, the honourable member for Clermont said he had heard him (the Colonial Treasurer) state that he had issued railway passes to people coming into the colony to forward them to New South Wales *via* Dalby. He wished distinctly to say that that assertion was incorrect. As to the remarks of the honourable member for Kennedy, he coincided with what that honourable member had said as to the requirements of the Port Douglas road, and to a certain extent he went with the honourable member for Bowen as to the manner in which the people themselves had incurred a heavy preliminary expense in making the road practical before any Government expenditure upon it took place. It would be a great pity if, after the manner in which the inhabitants of Port Douglas had opened up that road and encouraged traffic upon it, the Government should neglect it, especially when it had been proved to be the better route of the two.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was sorry if he had put words into the Colonial Treasurer's mouth which he never uttered; but he had been under the impression that the honourable gentleman had admitted the fact, which had been repeated here over and over again, and never denied. It did not much matter whether the Colonial Treasurer said it or not—

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would give the statement a most distinct and explicit denial. He had heard the statement made before, but it had never been attributed to him until to-night.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was quite true that a Minister did give free passes to labourers; but it was not the Colonial Treasurer who did it, but his former colleague, Mr. Stewart. With regard to the question of the Mackay roads, he was certain the Colonial Treasurer did mislead the House the other night. The honourable member for Bowen based his motion on the fact that, in the municipality of Mackay the Government had sold a much greater proportion of land, the proceeds of which went into the Consolidated Revenue, than had been the case in any other town, and that the municipality participated in but a very slight degree in the traffic which went through the streets to the wharves. The case made out was scarcely strong enough, perhaps; but the Colonial Treasurer greatly weakened it by stating that there were wharves at the end of the streets at which all the produce that came from the interior was shipped, and that the municipality, and not the Government, got the benefit of the wharfage rates. He (Mr. McIlwraith) voted against the motion on that ground. But the facts were quite different. A great proportion of the wharves from which the produce was shipped turned out to be private property,

the benefit from which to the municipality last year amounted to less than £5. The matter now stood in a different light, and if the honourable member could manage to get his motion before the House again, he should support it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that, with regard to the population of Cairns, it had lately been his duty, on an application for the establishment of a State school there, to obtain the fullest information possible with respect to it. The information came to him from many sources, and the conclusion he arrived at was that Cairns was a permanent township, likely not to diminish but to increase. As to the two roads to the Hodgkinson, he had been over them both, and from an engineering point of view, he thought that from Cairns was the better of the two. He was informed on high authority that thousands of pounds would have to be spent on the road over the Granite Range before it could be used by anything but empty drays.

Mr. STEVENSON hoped the Minister for Works would tell the committee why the pastoral district of Burke had been neglected in the matter of roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the inhabitants of the pastoral district of Burke were very few and far between. It was chiefly occupied by cattle, and there was no traffic or industry whatever.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not know where the Minister for Works had got his information from. Stations were now as thick in the Burke as in the Mitchell district, and they were well-stocked, not only with cattle, but with sheep as well. He believed there was not a square mile in the district of Burke that had not been taken up.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that, without wishing to say anything in disparagement of Cairns or its inhabitants, he had been told to-day by a District Court judge, who had recently been there, that the place was positively declining. As to the two roads to the Hodgkinson, that question had already been decided by the carriers in favour of the Port Douglas road. The information given to the Minister for Works by a practical man like the manager of Cobb's coaches must be much more valuable to the committee than the limited experience of the Attorney-General. With regard to the Burke district, the Minister for Works must be thinking of the district as it was a few years ago. It was now almost entirely occupied. There were three towns—Hughenden, Georgetown, and Normanton, and a numerous population, independent of the pastoral lessees. Certainly the district had not been fairly treated in the Estimates. There were two items, of £250 each, namely—Townsville to Thornton's Gap, and Townsville to Dalrymple township—which were on the road towards the Burke;

but there was nothing down for the road from Thornborough to Georgetown, on which there was a good deal of traffic. The only item put down for the district itself, was £250 for branch roads between the reefs and Georgetown, which at a moderate computation would amount to about £1 per mile.

Mr. WALSH said he had lately received a letter from a gentleman at Cairns, who deplored the decadence of the place, and said that even the banking establishments were migrating, owing to the total cessation of business and the departure of the population to Port Douglas. Touching the Burke district, he happened to know a little about it, being in constant communication with persons residing there. The constant outcry was that in that district, the largest in the colony, and one to which none would hereafter be compared in importance, was, that not a single Government officer was to be met with in the pastoral portions. Owing to the constant neglect by Government of that great district, the inhabitants were coming to think that they were not Queenslanders at all, and his only astonishment was, that they did not prove it most emphatically by setting the Customs establishment at defiance. They were only aware that they were in the colony when they had to pay the rents for their runs, or the duties on the goods they had to import at that neglected town of Normanton. There were almost a thousand miles of road, and not one penny had been spent upon them. The paltry sum of £250 was only a tenth part of what ought to be granted for the small part of the Burke for which it was intended. If honourable members wanted a gross instance of the favouritism with which the revenue was dispensed, they had only to look to the Burke district; but it was part and parcel of the system of the Government to centralise everything in Brisbane, and to keep back the North as much as possible. If he were the member for the district, he should move the omission of the item to show his contempt for the paltry provision the Government had made for its requirements.

Mr. MURPHY said he was obliged to the honourable member for Kennedy for calling attention, during his absence, to the sum down for the roads from the Hodgkinson to Cairns and Port Douglas. He had been communicated with by the residents of the Hodgkinson and Port Douglas, and they both expressed a strong opinion that the money should be expended on the Port Douglas road. For the present, at all events, the traffic had settled in the direction of Port Douglas. He was glad to hear that the Minister for Works had already expressed an opinion favourable to this proposal. He did not say that the amount was sufficient for the district, for he hoped to address the House to-morrow evening in

reference to the requirements and interests of the Hodgkinson and Cook, and hoped that he should succeed in carrying his motions. With respect to the sums set down for the Cook, it would be conceded by-and-by that they were inadequate. There was a large population settled in it, working the goldfields, and their interests were paramount, he submitted, to the interests of a small population in a large pastoral district, although he would not quarrel over such district also receiving a fair share of attention. As he understood that the honourable Minister for Works was in favour of the money being spent on the Port Douglas road, he begged to say that he should be satisfied, so far as the expenditure for that particular road was concerned.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the only information he could give the honourable member for Kennedy respecting the item Townsville to Cape Goldfield was, that the estimates were prepared by Mr. MacMillan and approved by Mr. Byerley. The honourable member would hardly expect him to name the particular spots where the money was to be spent.

Mr. MACROSSAN said he would tell the honourable gentleman where the money should be spent, as he had confessed that he did not know. The three items—Townsville to Thornton's Gap, Dalrymple, and Cape Goldfield—were all for one road. The amounts for the first two places should be spent between Townsville to Dalrymple, and the other should be spent on the road from Dalrymple to the Cape. If all was devoted to the road between Townsville and Dalrymple, the other portion of the road would derive no expenditure, and would soon become impassable. He would now draw attention to the fact that there was no money down for the road from Dalrymple to Hughenden, and on to the Diamantina. There was a large population in and around the Diamantina who drew their supplies from Townsville; some supplies were also coming from Charters Towers, but he believed the greater portion went by way of Hughenden. The carriers had done a great deal towards the making of the road from Hughenden to the Diamantina. In the North the people were in the habit of making their own roads, and, in some cases, substantial bridges which was perhaps the reason why their claims were so much neglected. It was time, however, the Government gave some attention to the road from Dalrymple to Hughenden, and on to the Diamantina. It was a long distance, and carriage was high owing to the road being bad in places.

Mr. STEVENSON was in hopes that after the expression of opinion that had been given, the Minister for Works would have intimated that he would put a sum on the

Supplementary Estimates for the Burke district, and save the honourable member who represented it the trouble of tabling a motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no intention of doing anything of the sort. The estimates were prepared by the Engineer of Roads, who was quite as competent to know what was required as the honourable member for Clermont.

Mr. MACROSSAN thought the honourable gentleman must be mistaken in theory. No doubt, in fact, the Engineer of Roads had prepared the estimates, but he made bold to say that officer had not put his foot in the Burke district for three years, his time being taken up elsewhere. He had probably derived his information from the road inspector, who had not gone beyond Georgetown.

Mr. IVORY could say that the Engineer of Roads for the district in which the Burnett was included had not been in it for the last two years, and he believed that the Engineer of Roads for the North had not been in the Burke. For the honourable gentleman to say that he derived his information from a man who had never been in the district was perfect nonsense. He should see that these officers went through the districts upon which they reported.

Mr. PERKINS said that £19,000 was no doubt a small sum for the Northern divisions, considering the many districts which it embraced; but the worst feature was the way the money was expended. They might be more careful in the North than in the South; but he could assure the committee that, especially as regards this side of the range, for every pound voted not ten shillings' value was obtained. In the construction of a mere culvert he had seen the cost increased by adzing and squaring the logs when there was not the slightest necessity for doing so. If this was going on so near home, it was no doubt also taking place in the North. He believed that one-half of the money went in caretaking or superintending. They knew that men were unnecessarily employed, and that they gave no adequate return to the country for their salaries; places were created for them, but he hoped that men would come forward soon and deal with these persons. He objected to the Attorney-General's statement about Cairns. To learn the present state of that place and its probable future, there was no necessity to have private communications. They knew perfectly well that it was doomed, and that those who could get away were shifting out of it. He considered that the Government ought to return the money to the persons whom they had induced to buy land in Cairns by their flaring advertisements. They had ruined it by the readiness with which they had declared rival ports. They ought not,

on the clap-trap cry of interested persons, be so ready to open rival ports and disturb the existing state of things. As to Port Salisbury, he was informed that if it was to succeed, one or two of the other ports must go to the wall. With respect to the Burke district, if the statement of the Minister for Works was correct, he might as well not consider it a part of the colony at all. Was the putting down of such a sum as £250 the way to encourage the settlement of such a district? Was it not rather an admission that he did not expect it to be a source of revenue this year or next? If it was regarded as part of the colony it was surely worth while holding out inducements to people to settle in it. A decent sum of money should be now expended, for it was bound to come back twenty-fold by-and-by. He believed it was one of the richest portions of the colony in mineral wealth, and if the Government had a sense of their duty they would most decidedly have ascertained through their officers what were the obstacles to getting into the interior, and made provision for their removal. In this colony, however, people had first to find out and develop the resources of a district before the Government took any notice of it. If the Government had any faith in the colony, or the future of the Burke, they would have shown the settlers there, even if they lived long distances from each other, that they were aware of their existence, and would have held out inducements to them to bring their friends into the district from the other colonies, or from other parts of the colony.

Mr. HALY was certain that the Minister for Works had too much sense to really believe that the Burke district only required £250. He was quite positive that the amount would be wasted; it was too small to be of any use, and if he were the member for the district, he would ask for a larger sum or have the item struck off.

Mr. MURPHY said he knew something about the way Port Douglas and Cairns were opened, and would acquit the Government of being precipitate in declaring the two places ports. The people in the North thought the Government were particularly slow in the opening of both places.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved, that a sum of £37,985 be granted for the construction of buildings and for general votes (subdivision).

Mr. WALSH asked whether the honourable gentleman was in earnest in asking for £3,000 for a jetty at Sandgate? For the whole of the Burke district, only £250 was allotted; over £30,000 had been voted for East Moreton, which was contiguous to Brisbane; and now the Government had the audacity to ask for £3,000 for a jetty at such a place as Sandgate. He hoped

the item would not be carried; not one farthing should be voted if he could get honourable members to assist him in opposing it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed the jetty at Sandgate would be very convenient for residents and visitors.

Mr. STEVENSON said he congratulated the Minister for Works on the earnestness of his advocacy, and would like to hear what defence of the vote the honourable member for East Moreton would make.

Mr. WALSH said if the Minister for Works did not withdraw the item he should insist upon all the items being taken *seriatim*, as such a vote was an insult to the community. He would rather stay there a week or a month than allow such a vote to pass.

Mr. IVORY said the committee were entitled to hear the opinion of the member for the district, who was no doubt thoroughly conversant with its requirements. It was clear from the faint-hearted way in which the Minister for Works defended the item, that he expected his colleague would give some information with regard to it. He hoped the honourable gentleman would give some information, so as to justify the Minister for Works in either making a firm stand, or withdrawing the item.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was a very old vote, and had appeared on the Estimates for many years. He believed it was first brought forward about five years ago, when Mr. Brookes was the member for East Moreton. The jetty would be convenient for the people of Sandgate, and also for persons who wished to go down the river and land at Sandgate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS could only say that session after session there had been discussions as to the merits of this pier at Sandgate. The honourable member for Warrego said he was determined to die on the floor of the House, or would stay for a month, or something to the same effect; and the same thing had been said before on various occasions. His honourable colleague was, he thought, quite justified in putting the amount on the Estimates after what had passed last session. When the vote was moved in committee several divisions took place. It was strongly opposed by the honourable member for Port Curtis, who asserted something similar to what had been said by the honourable member for Warrego to-night, and the question resolved itself apparently into a trial of strength. The first division was 15 in favour of the jetty and 12 against it, and the next 14 against 13. The discussion continued, and the next division, taken after midnight, was 13 against 13, and the vote was lost by the deciding vote of the Chairman of Committees. There was, therefore, no opinion taken on the merits of the case, though honourable members on the Opposi-

tion side were able to beat honourable members on the Government side. They had then the assistance of the honourable members for Aubigny and Toowoomba, no doubt because those honourable gentlemen considered that Sandgate was not only of local importance, but a place of general usefulness.

Mr. PERKINS: I have been there since.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he thought the honourable member had also been there before, as he had a recollection of seeing the honourable member at Sandgate some time before the vote of last year was discussed. There was no necessity, however, for the committee to sit all night, and he would suggest that the honourable member for Warrego move his amendment.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he agreed with the Minister for Lands, and would move that the item be struck out. It was trifling to propose such a vote, after the discussion on a previous occasion, without one word of explanation. It was, no doubt, on account of the honourable member representing the district most interested being a Minister of the Crown, that the vote got the mild support it actually did last year. There was some discussion as to the real merits of the case when a late Minister for Lands, Mr. Fryar, brought forward the motion; but on no other occasion.

Mr. BEATTIE said, before the question was put, he wished to draw attention to the item "Bowen, public buildings, £5,000." He had heard that an agitation was on foot to remove the residence of the Northern judge to Townsville, and he presumed the necessity for the erection of public buildings had some connection with the District Court. He, therefore, wished to know what public buildings were proposed to be constructed at Bowen at a cost of £5,000. Between £6,000 and £7,000 was put down for buildings in that place, and he was not aware that the success of the port, at the present time, warranted such a large expenditure.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he had moved that the item be struck out, but he would wish the amendment to be put in the usual way, namely, that £34,985 only be granted. He moved the amendment simply to have a division and test the opinion of the committee as to whether the amount should be spent or not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said, in answer to the honourable member for Fortitude Valley, that the sum of £5,000 put down for public buildings at Bowen was for the purpose of erecting a pilot station, a lighthouse, other public buildings and a Supreme Court House. He was informed that the Government had been paying £250 a-year rent for a Supreme Court House as as there was no Court House there of any kind.

Mr. PERKINS said the honourable the Minister for Lands had stated that he saw him in Sandgate a few weeks before the vote for the jetty was taken last year; but if he voted wrongly last year it was no reason why he should do so again this year. He had discovered the error of his ways, and would be glad to be able to recall many of the votes he had given. For instance, he had voted for the Maryborough and Gympie railway, on the understanding that it was to cost only £3,000 per mile, and now he found the cost was to be something like £9,000 per mile. He would also like to be able to recall his vote for the Bundaberg and Mount Perry railway. Because an honourable member voted wrong one year that was no reason why he should not retrace his steps and correct himself. He had been to Sandgate and spent some time with one of the principal owners, who showed him where the railway and the pier were to be, and proved conclusively that the latter would pay 40 per cent. per annum. When he (Mr. Perkins) asked why, if such were the case, the people of Sandgate did not make it, his informant replied, "I am Sandgate; all the others are only birds of passage." Even without being fortified with that information from the sole resident of the place, while he (Mr. Perkins) saw the House spending a night over a matter of £50, and while Sandgate had a splendid road to it, and other advantages, he considered it a fraud to spend on building a jetty there, an amount of money which was much more required in many places in the interior.

Mr. BEOR said, with regard to the question asked by the honourable member for Fortitude Valley, he would like to say that the present public buildings were all rented, and something like 10 per cent of the sum asked for was being spent in rent. The Minister for Works had only mentioned the Supreme Court House, but he was informed that the Post Office and Land Office were rented, and the total amount paid for rent was about £500 a-year. With regard to removing the Supreme Court, he did not think much of the agitation alluded to. It was carried on by a very small section of the community at Townsville—chiefly, he believed, by an attorney who had not been very successful, and who thought that by having the court transferred to that place more business would come to the lawyers there. But were the Supreme Court removed, a courthouse would still be needed at Bowen, because a Circuit Court must be held there.

Question—That the sum of £34,985 only be granted—put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £5,855 be granted for the general establishment in connection with the railway department.

Mr. GROOM said the present was a proper time to bring under the notice of the Minister for Works the case of one of the employés in the Railway department. The case would have been brought under the notice of the committee by the honourable member for Stanley; but as he was not able to be present, he (Mr. Groom) had undertaken to represent the matter to the committee and the Minister for Works. The Agent-General in England, it appeared, had entered into an agreement with a person called Maxwell with a view of fixing on to the locomotives and carriages in the Railway department a patent brake. In order that the committee might understand the exact nature of the case, he would read the agreement which had been entered into, and then give the man's own statement of his case when he came to Queensland. The agreement was as follows:—

“MEMORANDUM of an agreement entered into this thirtieth day of June one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven between the Honourable Arthur Macalister, C.M.G., Agent-General for Queensland (acting for and on behalf of the Queensland Government), of 32, Charing Cross, London, S.W., of the one part, and Andrew Maxwell, mechanic, of 27, Ronald-street, Glasgow, of the other part.

“The said Andrew Maxwell hereby agrees to make himself proficient in the fitting up, working, and ordinary repair of the Westinghouse brake, as applied to locomotives and other rolling-stock; and then to proceed to Queensland, there to assist and give such instruction as is required of him in the equipping, working, and repairing of the Westinghouse brake on the engines and carriages and other vehicles as he may be directed on arrival in the colony; and he also agrees to drive such locomotive engines as may be required on his arrival in the colony, and to conform generally to all rules and regulations in force on the lines and in the workshops in and on which he may be called upon to work; and he agrees to proceed to the colony by such ship as the Agent-General may direct; and he further agrees to work to the instructions of the locomotive engineer in the colony, or such other officer as the said engineer may appoint, and also to instruct such other persons as may be required of him in fitting up, working, and repair of the said brake.

“And the said Agent-General agrees to pay to the said Andrew Maxwell in consideration for the services so rendered, the sum of thirty shillings per week from the time of his engagement, viz.:—The thirtieth day of June, 1877, until his arrival in the colony, when he agrees to pay to the said A. Maxwell the sum of twelve shillings and sixpence per day for services rendered, as set forth above, in fitting up, working, and repairing the said brake, and in driving any locomotive engine that may be required of him.

“And the said Andrew Maxwell further agrees to serve the Queensland Government to the best of his ability for the term of six months after the starting of the locomotive fitted with

the Westinghouse brake in the colony, and from the expiration of such date he agrees to conform to rules and regulations under which such locomotive drivers work in the colony, his wages always standing at the rate of twelve shillings and sixpence per day from such time as he may work.

“In witness whereof the parties hereto have set their hands on the date first above written.

“Witness to the signature of
the Hon. Arthur Macalister,
C.M.G., } A. MACALISTER.
THOMAS LAW.

“Witness to the signature of
Andrew Maxwell, } A. MAXWELL.”
THOMAS LAW.

He would state the man's case in his own words, so that the Minister for Works could make a satisfactory explanation. He wished it to be understood that he knew nothing personally of the case, but had told the man in supplying particulars to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The committee would, therefore, hear the man's own statement, and then be prepared to deal with the matter in a straightforward way. Maxwell had, as yet, received no reply, though his letter to the Minister for Works was dated Ipswich, 20 April, 1878. It was as followed:—

“Elizabeth street,

“Ipswich, 20 April, 1878.

“To the Hon. Wm. Miles,

“Minister for Works, Brisbane.

“SIR,—As an employé of the Government Locomotive Works, Ipswich, I take the liberty of submitting for your early consideration what follows, in the hope that you may thereby deem it your duty to make inquiry into the position I have occupied in the said Works since entering under engagement, in November last.

“About the end of May last year I made application to W. H. Ashwell, Esq., executive engineer in London for the Queensland Government, for a situation as locomotive driver in Queensland; and on the recommendation of R. T. Fairlie, Esq., C.E., London, and after necessary instruction received in the fitting, working, and repairing of the ‘Westinghouse air-brake,’ I was appointed by Mr. Ashwell to proceed to Queensland to assist in the fitting up of the said brake on the engines and carriages and to drive on the Government railways. I was formally engaged on the 30th day of June following by the Agent-General in London, acting on behalf of the Queensland Government.

“I arrived in Brisbane per the ‘Roxburghshire,’ about the end of October, and immediately proceeded to Ipswich to commence work in terms of my contract.

“On meeting the locomotive superintendent, I was challenged by him as to my fitness for the position I had undertaken. The first question put to me by the locomotive superintendent was to the effect, ‘What did I profess to be?’ I answered that I was a locomotive driver of long experience; had been under instruction from the ‘Westinghouse air-brake’ representatives in Glasgow in the fitting up,

&c., of the brake for some time previous to leaving for Queensland, and was ready to start operations agreeably to the terms stipulated in the contract.

"The locomotive superintendent then intimated he would take no responsibility as far as the fitting up of the brake was concerned; and his opinion was, that if I was not prepared to take the sole charge and fit up without mechanical assistance, he would not proceed further.

"I answered that I was quite prepared to fulfil my part of the agreement, and assist in the fitting up, &c., of the brake, but could not undertake the sole responsibility without receiving mechanical assistance. I may here mention it has been found necessary on former occasions to employ, at least, two practical mechanics in the fitting up of the brake on a locomotive alone.

"I was next ordered to start work as a driver, now that employment for me at the brake had been refused, and made a few runs from Ipswich to Brisbane, Toowoomba, Warwick, and other stations.

"On my last run from Warwick, and after leaving Toowoomba station, I was questioned by the Commissioner for Railways (who accompanied on the engine) as to my knowledge of a certain portion of the time-table, having reference to a train passing in the opposite direction at a particular station and hour. My attention being wholly taken up with the management of the engine, I was unable, immediately, to reply satisfactorily to the Commissioner's query till a few minutes after, when reasonable time had been given me to make a satisfactory answer. On the day following I received notice from the locomotive superintendent to the effect that, by the orders of the Commissioner, I was prohibited from driving for having failed to reply immediately to his question of the preceding day.

"I make no comments on this last notice, nor on the extraordinary behaviour of the Commissioner on the day in question in placing himself in a position on the engine, obstructing my view ahead of the line.

"On the lapse of a few days I was again instructed to resume driving, and made a few runs to Brisbane, &c., when official notice again informed me to drop work as a 'driver.' No proper explanation was tendered for this strange conduct of affairs.

"Since the issue of this order I have been in the position of, and treated as, a common labourer in the locomotive works.

"About two months ago the locomotive superintendent urged me to break my contract and accept the reduced pay of nine shillings and sixpence per day, at the same time stating that my greatest fault, from first to last, had been the rate of wages (twelve shillings and sixpence per day) at which I had been engaged by the Agent-General. For refusing this overture on the part of the locomotive superintendent, I was informed that no employment would be given me on the railway on the expiry of my engagement.

"I am satisfied, judging from the progress made with the fitting up of the brake under the auspices of the loco-superintendent, it will not work properly till some very material

alterations are effected; and I wish particularly to mention that I am as ready and willing as ever to fit up the brake if one or two practical men (not labourers) are appointed to give me assistance. It would be absurd and unreasonable to attempt fitting up without this assistance.

"In accordance with the Commissioner's interpretation of the agreement, I received official notice a few days ago, intimating that my engagement would expire on the sixth day of May next.

"I remain, &c.,

"ANDREW MAXWELL."

That was the case of Mr. Maxwell substantially as he had given it, and on the face of it it appeared that the man had received an injustice. The executive engineer in London must have been perfectly satisfied that he was a competent man, and it would be an insult to the Agent-General to suppose, if they had any confidence in him at all, that he would have entered into such an agreement unless he was satisfied that the man was fully competent to undertake the work. It was extraordinary that persons in Queensland, who had no knowledge of his abilities, should attempt to set up their opinions against those of the professional engineer in London. Mr. Maxwell had received an injury because he had been induced to give up profitable employment in London, and when he came to Queensland, instead of being treated with the courtesy which a stranger in a strange land should command, was made to feel that he was an intruder. The Minister for Works ought to say whether any remuneration would be given to him, as he had been out of employment for a considerable time. He (Mr. Groom) would have brought it under the notice of the House at another time, but had taken counsel with other members, and had brought it forward now, that it might be fairly discussed. He laid more stress upon the agreement made with Mr. Maxwell than upon the man's own statement, because it showed that a contract was entered into, and such a contract could not have been entered into unless the Agent-General was satisfied that the man could undertake the work he had agreed to do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the case was a very simple one; the honourable member had read the contract between the Agent-General and Mr. Maxwell, the engine-driver. The latter came to Queensland to do certain work, and when he arrived here it was found that he had undertaken to do what he was incompetent to perform. He knew nothing at all about fitting up a Westinghouse brake, and was incompetent to drive an engine. He himself remembered coming up the range one day when the train had a very light load, and the engine was stuck up three or four times. At Highfields they had to leave two of the vans; and even then there was a stoppage

before the train got to Toowoomba. There was no hardship at all, therefore, as regarded the man, because he fulfilled his time according to the contract, and was paid for his work. He (the Minister for Works) would like to know whether, because the man was incompetent to do what he undertook, there was any case of hardship. On the other hand, it would be a very great hardship to the public if, under the circumstances, he had been continued in the service. The charge against the Commissioner for Railways, of standing before him on the engine, was, on the assurance of that gentleman himself, utterly untrue.

Mr. BEATTIE said that a great mistake had been made by the Government on the man's arrival. The first duty of the officer in charge of the engine department was to set the man to work upon the Westinghouse brake, for he was evidently engaged to do that particular duty. If it could be proved that he was incompetent to perform the work he had undertaken to do by agreement, it was then the clear duty of the department to get rid of him at once. If the man was as represented, why was he kept on at all? His complaint was, that they never gave him an opportunity of fulfilling his agreement. The engineer in charge ought to have given him every opportunity to prove whether he was competent to carry on what he had agreed to do, and, if not, he should have been dismissed at once. It was hard to see why, if he were incompetent, he should have been kept for six months in the service. This was where the Government had made a mistake. Again, if he was incompetent to drive the engine, why did they allow him to be in charge of one even for a single journey; certainly, if he had had no opportunity, as he alleged, of fitting up the brake, there was blame attaching to the engineer in charge.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was a very unlikely thing that a man of this kind would be sent out from London on the recommendation of a practical engineer, unless he was competent to do what he engaged to do in his agreement, namely, to instruct the department in fitting up the Westinghouse brake. His complaint now was, that he never had an opportunity of doing this. They simply said to him, "There are the tools, go and fit up the brake yourself." If they had given him the assistance he claimed, the man might have been a success; but this was evidently not done; on the face of it, the way in which he was treated indicated a desire to get him out of the service. It was very easy to get rid of a man if he was incompetent, but it was no charge to bring against him that he could not make explanations regarding a time-table when the Commissioner questioned him when he was in

charge of an engine. The Commissioner tested him as to where the train ought to be at a certain time, and the best engineer on the line would be likely to be hurried in such a case. The whole thing seemed to indicate a desire to get rid of the man. If he was incompetent, there was an easy way of settling the matter by dismissing him at once. As to what the Minister for Works said about the engine stopping, he had seen the best engineer in the colony compelled to stop half-a-dozen times before he got to his destination. This might arise from many causes, but the blame should not be cast upon the engine-driver unless it was shown he really was to blame. In this case the Minister for Works was not prepared to say it was the fault of the engine-driver, and he (Mr. McIlwraith) must come to the conclusion that a great hardship had been done to this man. At all events, the point raised by the honourable member for Toowoomba had not been answered by the Minister for Works. On the general question, he (Mr. McIlwraith) would say that the railway estimates had been delayed to such a late period of the session that he had no intention of initiating a long debate upon this question. He knew perfectly well that the House was not capable of giving full attention to this important branch of the subject. He blamed the Government for delaying the Estimates, and especially for the way in which they had conducted their business during the last two days. In ten minutes last night the Government might have come to the point at which they now were. He himself made a proposal to the Premier which was accepted; that the whole of the Works Estimates, up to buildings, should be passed last night, but the Minister for Works himself declined to go on, otherwise they might have commenced to-day at the point from which they were now proceeding. He could not, however, allow the Railway estimates to go without a comment, because they were different from all the other estimates. Leaving out of consideration altogether the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the Minister for Works as an economist, the Railway estimates were marked by increases which did not appear in any other department. There was scarcely a clerk whose salary was not raised. In fact, in the whole of the department, increases were the rule, so far as the higher grade of officers were concerned; but when members turned over to to the next page, they would find that the mechanical departments, though they were increased in number, were not increased in wages. When the committee considered that this came from the Minister who publicly declared within the last three months that the department over which he had control could be managed with one-

third less men than were in it, these increases came with extraordinarily bad grace, especially when it was remembered that the honourable gentleman had never even referred to the fact that there were such increases. Where, then, did the economy promised by the Minister for Works come in? It certainly did not come in in the Works department anywhere; and the Railway department appeared worse, by comparison, than any of the others. He (Mr. McIlwraith) could give the committee a very simple test whether the railways were being more efficiently and economically managed than they were at any other time. And it was this:—Last year the Minister for Works asked, for the different railways, £130,322 to manage traffic of £250,000. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had not gone into the Supplementary Estimates, but was merely taking what the Minister asked last year, and that amounted to 52 per cent. on the revenue. The honourable gentleman then showed that 52 per cent. of the revenue must go to work the railways. This year the Estimates showed that for £275,000 traffic, the Minister asked £149,209, or 54 per cent. So that there was no economy whatever shown by them. On the contrary, the honourable gentleman said he required 2 per cent. more to work the railways than he did to work them last year. The question naturally arose—Were the railways in such a position that the honourable gentleman ought to ask more of the revenue in order to provide for the expenditure? His (Mr. McIlwraith's) answer was decidedly "No." Every additional mile of railway opened ought to decrease the percentage. This was being practically proved two years ago, but now it was the other way, and, after opening a greater number of miles last year than in any previous year, as the Premier boasted at Rockhampton, the expenses were actually greater. He (Mr. McIlwraith) would have gone into this question more elaborately had the debate taken place at an earlier period of the session; but now he was only able to draw the serious attention of the committee to the fact that these Estimates showed an amount of extravagance not seen in any other Estimates, and that the Commissioner's report gave signs of a complete disorganisation of the Railway department. He made this statement after carefully reading the reports of the Commissioners of Railways presented to the Parliaments of New Zealand, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide; and after reading those reports, he was bound to say that the report of the Queensland Commissioner was a disgrace to the colony. After studying this document, he must say advisedly that instead of placing it before Parliament to supply them with information, and to inform the country how the railways were

being worked, it had been concocted with the object of keeping from members of Parliament information to which they were entitled, and information which they had had in previous years. He could point out a large number of items in which information had been withheld; but he did not wish to take up the time of the committee, seeing that members had made up their minds to close the session. He did not intend, therefore, to make a long speech; but should not discharge his duty unless he called the attention of the country to the matter. In 1877, the Commissioner presented a report, one of the tables of which gave an amount of information that had not been given in previous years. It gave the expense per train mile on the different railways, and the expense per mile of railway actually constructed. None of that information was given this year; the amount of expense per mile was omitted entirely. And, therefore, no opportunities were given in this report by which an expert could find out what the amount would be. Instead of giving the expense per train mile, the Commissioner put it in a way different altogether from last year, and in a way that was almost amusing. At the same time he stated that he had drawn up his report in accordance with the custom of neighbouring colonies; but that was quite wrong. The custom of neighbouring colonies was to make up the expense per train mile by taking into consideration simply the trains that paid; but, in order to reduce the expense per train mile, the Queensland Commissioner this year had added on to the amount of train mile run, not only the shunting and piloting, but also the Ministerial carriages, and arrangements of that sort. The effect of this was to reduce the amount of the expense of the mileage of the railway, and in this way the Commissioner proved that he had saved this year, by his economy, 10d. per train mile. Honourable members would see at once that this was a glaringly absurd manipulation of figures, which led to ridiculous results. For example, when the Minister for Works went up to Toowoomba: the ordinary way, one would think, would be that he would take his seat in a first-class carriage; but if the Commissioner took a whole train he added eighty miles to the mileage; and, according to the tables, added to the profits of the railway. In the same way an engine piloting for half-a-mile if made to do five miles instead has increased the profits of the railway, and the same with the shunting. This manipulation of figures had thus given a most absurd aspect to the entire report. He (Mr. McIlwraith) had compared it with the last Victorian report, and found that in Victoria they never dreamt of taking such things into their calculation, or

at any time including non-paying trains. But the most absurd part of the case came out in this way. It was shown last year by the Commissioner's report that the most cheaply-conducted line was the Northern line; but by this peculiar style of coming at the expenditure of running trains, the Northern line was made to be a good deal more expensive this year than the Southern line, whilst, at the same time, there was no fault found with the Northern people for the increased expenditure, nor was any reason given why this change had taken place. If the Northern line was worked more economically last year than the Southern line, and it was more expensive this year, surely some explanation could be given, but there was none except this manipulation of figures, which did not reflect credit upon the department. Until they got better information they would not have the department such as it ought to be. One plain course had been several times put before the department, and that was, to come to an agreement with the other colonies to give the same kind of information to Parliament, so that honourable members would be able to compare one with another. If that were done, honourable members would have something to go by; but now it was very difficult to compare results here with the results in the other colonies. And not only were they in this position now, but they were threatened next year that the Commissioner was not going to bring forward a report by which they could compare the progress next year with our position this year, because he was going to enter amongst the pay trains all the ballast-trains, so that it would make confusion worse confounded by depriving them next year of any standard by which they could compare this year. There were a dozen anomalies of the same kind he could point out, and altogether the Commissioner had made his report such a document that, if it did not confuse the Minister for Works, it had certainly confused him (Mr. McIlwraith); and he would defy even an expert to get any information whatever from it, as to the working of our lines, except that the department had tried in the most cunning way to conceal information which members of Parliament ought to have. He did not say that without having the facts before him to prove it. The instances he had given were quite sufficient to bear out the statements he had made. To go back to the vote actually before the committee, they wanted some explanation as to the increases put down in this department. It was an understood rule that no increases were to be made this year, and with a few exceptions that rule had been carried out in the other departments, and how was it that rule was not applied to the Railway department as well as the others? A certain economy was said

to be effected by the dismissal of Mr. Lowe, and while he did not think they had saved the salary of that officer, for he found that a much larger amount than his salary was distributed over several other officers, at the same time, judging from the reports in the papers, they had not gained anything in the efficient working of the department. He should like to know if there was any special reason why the increases should be confined to head clerks on page 60 of the Estimates, while there were no increases whatever for the workmen in the succeeding page.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was prepared to give an explanation as each item came before the committee, and was not going to follow the honourable member for Maranoa through his harangue about the cooking of this report. They all knew that when once that honourable member made a statement it was useless to contradict it, for he would still maintain it was correct, and when he made a mistake he would never admit that he was wrong. The first increase was £50 to the chief clerk, and it was given, owing to increased duties in consequence of the Commissioner taking charge of the traffic department. The next increase was £40 to the accountant, who originally lived rent free in a house, the property of the Government. This house had been burnt down by accident, and this increase was given to the officer in consequence, it having been withheld from him before, because he had the use of the house. The next increase was to the clerk in charge of trains, whose duty it was to see that the rolling-stock was kept in such order, that it could be brought into use whenever and wherever required. The other increases were chiefly sums that were previously paid out of Loan votes, and were now placed on the Estimates. With reference to special trains, the number employed by the engineer's department for inspection and delivery of material, was twenty-six; by the locomotive department, for coal, firewood, and trial engines, eighty-five; trains for pay-staff, and return trains for general traffic, eighty-one; special trains for His Excellency the Governor, twenty-five; for members of the Ministry, seventeen; for the Commissioner, three; and for material, 144; making a total of 381. With reference to the cost of working, he had prepared a table showing the cost per train mile in the different colonies. In 1877, South Australia had 302 miles of railway open; the train miles run were 567,389; cost per train mile, 6s. 4d., and earnings, per mile 6s. 11½. Victoria had 702 miles open; train miles run, 1,262,782; cost per train mile, 4s. 8½d.; and earnings, 8s. 9d. New South Wales had 509 miles open; train miles run, 1,688,964; cost per train mile, 4s. 0½d., and earnings, 8s. 2½.

In 1876, in Queensland, there were 298 miles open; train miles run, 392,740; cost per train mile, 4s. 8½d., and earnings, 7s. 5½d. In 1877, there were 359 miles open; train miles run, 577,107; cost per train mile 3s. 6d., and earnings 7s. 3½d. He thought that bore very favourable comparison with the other colonies, more particularly when they considered that the other colonies were much more densely populated than Queensland. With regard to the increases, it must be borne in mind that, had Mr. Lowe continued in the service as traffic manager, he would have been entitled to a residence which would have cost about £1,500; but since his services had been dispensed with, house accommodation would not be required.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he did not see why he should admit being in the wrong as long as he was right. Did the Minister for Works read his (Mr. McIlwraith's) letter in the *Courier* yesterday? If he had, he would have seen exactly how the case stood; and when he asserted that railways were being made in Victoria for £2,153 per mile, he was simply quoting the words of the Engineer-in-Chief, in a letter recently addressed to himself. Why should he admit that he was wrong, simply because the Minister for Works denied his statements?

The PREMIER said that Mr. Woods, the Minister for Railways in Victoria, made a statement the other day that the last 100 miles of railway completed in that colony cost, all charges included, £5,070 per mile. The statement made by the honourable member for Maranoa, both here and in the *Courier*, the other day was, he had not the slightest doubt, correct as far as it went; but, as the honourable gentleman was well aware, there were many charges to be added, such as rails, stations, and so forth. To the public it would have a misleading aspect when it was stated that railways were made in Victoria at the rate of £2,153 per mile. But even the higher figure he had mentioned was a comparatively low one, and he was happy to see that the Victorians were making railways at a somewhat cheaper cost than the Queenslanders. There were good reasons for this. Contract labour was higher here than in Victoria, and earthworks were done there at a cheaper rate per cubic yard than here. It would be a mistake to allow it to go forth that the actual cost of railways in Victoria was as represented by the honourable member for Maranoa.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he had never stated that the total cost was £2,153 per mile, and the statement of the Premier was not inconsistent with what he had urged both here and in the *Courier*, namely, that railways in course of construction in Victoria were being constructed at a cost of

about £3,000 per mile. No contracts were let in Victoria last year, and this year 86½ miles had been let on a new system. The new engineers were men more capable of carrying out a cheap system of railway-making than the old ones, and the contractors for these 86½ miles of railway had entered into a heavy bond to do the work, with the exception of the station buildings: and yards and rails, for £2,153 per mile. His statement was, therefore, perfectly right all through, in spite of the *Courier* and the Premier. The Minister for Works had given no satisfactory reason why the increases of salaries in this department should be given. Before consenting to the increase in the salary of the chief clerk from £450 to £500, some reason must be given for it, for the Railway department was in a thoroughly disorganised state and anything but a credit to all concerned in it. To test the question of increased salaries, he would move that the item "Chief clerk, £500" be reduced by £50.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the chief clerk had been fourteen years in the service, and had had a good deal of extra work to perform since the dismissal of the traffic manager. As to the disorganisation of the Railway department, he could not understand the honourable member, and would be obliged to the honourable member if he would point it out. He believed the department was never under better control and management, and never worked more smoothly and economically than at present.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works had given a denial instead of reasons. He wanted to know why a larger proportionate sum was required for the railway service this year, and this was not even answered by the long statement read by the Minister for Works about non-paying trains. Why did not this statement appear in the Commissioner's report for 1877, as it did in that for 1876? With regard to the chief clerk, no special case had been made out, for this individual's salary had already been increased 10 per cent. within a very short period.

The PREMIER wished to call attention to a Melbourne telegram which appeared in the *Courier* of the 17th instant, to the effect that a contract for an additional 100 miles of railway had been entered into, the cost per mile, with rolling-stock and fencing all the way, being £5,067. He did not know whether this conflicted with the statement of the honourable member for Maranoa, but it was satisfactory to know that railways of such a gauge could be made at that price in Victoria, because they ought to be made here for a still smaller sum.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the statement contained in the telegram did not traverse his position. There was possibly a good

deal of purchased land to be taken into consideration in the contract referred to.

Mr. WALSH said he was perfectly sure that the present management of the railway had not inspired the public with the confidence which existed before the honourable Minister for Works' advent. The honourable gentleman had publicly stated that there were twice as many officers in his department as there was necessity for. In order to criticise his conduct and action, let honourable members look down his estimates. How had the honourable gentleman carried out his statement made at Gympie, and the boast which he was constantly making before the House that he was an economical Minister? He had certainly cut down a number of officers, which action he (Mr. Walsh) was very much inclined to think was injudicious. The honourable gentleman had dispensed with five officers, but he had increased the cost of the department by £5,000. That was a style of his economy. When the late traffic manager, whom, in his peculiar calling, he believed to be the most capable man in all the colonies, was discharged, it was under the pretence that he was not wanted; but now they found a clerk in charge of trains at a salary of £400. What was the meaning of that, but that a traffic manager had been appointed under another name—a man who had not served his apprenticeship to this particular calling? There was another peculiar item—pay clerk, £300. He had information that this was a gentleman who had been lately taken into the service. Was that a fact, and were there no subordinates worthy of the position?

Mr. BEATTIE said he had made it his business to make inquiries with reference to the present railway management, and found that the general public had not many causes for complaint. He did not know where the honourable member for Warrego got his information. It was rather peculiar that the honourable member should tell them that every department was frightfully mismanaged.

Mr. WALSH said he had stated that the honourable Minister for Works prided himself upon the management of the Railway department being good, whilst, according to what was rumoured, that was not the general opinion of the country.

Mr. BEATTIE said the honourable member went on to find fault with the various increases of salaries, and also pointed out that, although there was a reduction of five officers, there was an increase of £5,000. If he had only looked at the item maintenance of permanent way, he would see an increase of £5,000. He (Mr. Beattie) did not think he would be justified in voting for the reduction of the salary for the chief clerk as proposed by the honourable member for Maranoa, because he

thought from the extra extensions of the railway there must be extra duties imposed upon that officer, and did not think £50 was too much of an increase.

Mr. GRIMES said he was sorry the Estimates had been brought on at that time of the evening. On looking over the returns given by the Commissioner for Railways, he found that the further their railways were pushed out, the greater was the increase in the cost of traffic, and also in the percentage of expenditure with reference to the traffic returns. No matter how much honourable members might reiterate, that by extending their railways they would bring in more traffic, the actual fact was, that they received less revenue proportionately. It was a positive fact that last year the increase was in this direction. As he understood the way the traffic returns were made out, each station was credited with the half of the traffic passing in and out of it, which would give a fair estimate of the value of each station. The Dalby station during the year 1875 was set down as having sent traffic through to the amount of £17,355. In the next year there was an increase of nearly £5,000. In 1877 the value of the traffic, including that from the stations beyond Dalby, amounted to only £29,928, or an increase of about £8,000. The increase of mileage along the line had been something like seventy-five miles, he was informed. At any rate, the return showed that there was only an increase of something like £8,000 in the value of the traffic from Dalby and the stations beyond it, which would tap the district now being penetrated by the line. It must be remembered that during 1876, when the line was not opened between Ipswich and Brisbane, the most of the wool and produce from Dalby was landed at Ipswich and thence taken to Brisbane, and the department lost that trade. During 1877, however, the line was open and the trade was secured by the department. Deducting the half of the cost of carrying between Ipswich and Brisbane credited to Dalby and the stations beyond, and taking also into account the traffic of a temporary character, caused by persons engaged in the construction of the railway, they would find that, so far from the increased traffic decreasing the annual interest which had to be paid for the cost of making their lines, they got really no increase of traffic at all; and that the further they went the more burden was being added to the people of the colony. The country ought to consider very seriously, before sanctioning the further extension of railways into the interior. For the interior a simple tramway, capable of a speed of four or five miles an hour, would ensure certainty of communication, and was all that was required. It was clear that the railways, constructed where there was a population, were the only ones

which would pay. The recent returns of the Southern and Western line showed that the line had returned about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the interest on the cost of construction over and above the working expenses. The whole of that profit had come from the portion of the line which was built in the populous districts; and it was evident that if railways were to be continued they must be constructed where the traffic was to be found. The tables which had been printed showed that the only places where the railways could be expected to pay and to develop the resources of the country were where the population was in existence to assist in the work of developing those resources. It had been stated that the further lines were pushed into the interior the sooner cattle would give place to sheep; but he would point out that wherever sheep had appeared in the colony, they had wasted the surface of the land and rendered agriculture and the cultivation of artificial grasses necessary.

Mr. PERKINS said the honourable member had gone away from the real point, and treated the committee to an oration about sheep, the surface of the country, and other subjects of which he appeared to know but little. It had been said, in connection with the Railway department, that everything was running smoothly, and something had been said about the duties and responsibilities of the officers being increased. Now, he knew that the men who really did the work were trained warehousemen and others, who got a miserable pittance of 30s. per week, and it was to them they had to look for regularity in getting goods. Those men deserved at least £3 or £3 10s. a-week, and the only reason why such duties were imposed upon them and their pay was so small was, that there were always five or six waiting for any vacant office. Would such a state of things in a commercial transaction be considered sound or evangelical? He maintained they had no right to keep men who discharged their duties efficiently, zealously, and honestly, in a state of almost pauperism, simply because there was a large supply of that class of labour. He would like to know who was now doing the work of traffic manager. For the last six weeks he (Mr. Perkins) had not travelled by a train that had started or arrived to its time, and when an accident happened, as it would, on the line, the cause would be want of punctuality. The engineers and guards seemed to do their work, but there was a want of superintendence. The fact of the matter was, that one officer who had all the responsibility and had to be always in attendance, was neither one thing nor the other. He was called clerk in charge of trains, and had only £400; while the

pay clerk, who was not responsible, received a salary of £300 a-year with allowances. The responsibility and authority should be centred somewhere, and people should know who was responsible for the starting of the trains. It was quite time some arrangement was come to, and the safety and lives of the public guaranteed in some way. As to the free passes, he thought they might be very well given to genuine *bona fide* ordained clergymen who were travelling on works of charity; but they should not be given to those disturbers of the public peace who only went up and down the line, getting in at one station and out at another. He hoped the honourable gentleman who initiated the discussion would insist upon some distinct understanding. He had no hesitation in saying that if anything happened it would be discovered no one was responsible. There was something rotten about the department. The Commissioner had too much work to do, and it was all moonshine to say he was the traffic manager. He (Mr. Perkins) had made it his business to ascertain, and he knew, that the "double" was being worked. The evidence given before the public gave him reason to know there was a dishonest person in the department, and a person connected with the department told him a barefaced falsehood to his face. There were persons about the department whose word he would not take under any consideration. All he wanted was to clear up the doubts that existed as to the responsibility of starting trains, and other matters. When Mr. Lowe was got rid of it was thought there would be an end of divided authority; but things were as bad now as ever.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he wished to say a few words as to the statement of the honourable member for Maranoa with regard to the cost of railways in Victoria. In his speech upon the Address the honourable member made a statement, which at the time had a good deal of effect upon him, respecting the cost of the railways in Victoria; but he (Mr. Garrick) now knew that the matter wanted some inquiry before they could accept the statement of the honourable member for Maranoa as correct. The question upon which the honourable member was speaking, was the cost of railways in Victoria, and in the course of his remarks he said:—

"The contracts were for eighty-six miles, and included one bridge 1,830 feet long, which, I believe, ought to be as expensive as the Maryborough and Gympie bridge; and the amount, including everything"—

"including everything"—he (Mr. Garrick) drew the attention of the committee to those words, because the member for Maranoa was not right when he made the

statement. He said he would include everything excepting—and there was an importance in both the succeeding words—“rolling-stock and stations, was £2,130 per mile.”

Of course ordinary persons would imagine that the honourable member included the rails, and would think that they had got a railway, with the rails, and complete in everything except rolling-stock and stations, for £2,130 per mile. But in his letter to-day, he (Mr. Garrick) found the honourable gentleman did not include rails, and was therefore wrong as to the £2,130. The correct figures would have been more like £3,000, and to that was to be added rolling-stock and stations. The honourable member's argument was that they were constructing railways cheaper in Victoria than in Queensland; but he (Mr. Garrick) was informed that the Western line, complete with rails, rolling-stock, and stations, would cost under £5,000 per mile, in fact something about £4,750 per mile. The honourable member, in his letter to the *Courier* to-day, said that paper was in error, and in what? In the fact that the honourable member and the *Courier* were speaking of two different things—that the paper was speaking of lines constructed, and that there were no contracts taken in 1877; but that there were contracts this year for eighty-six and a-half miles of railway. Therefore, the honourable gentleman said there could be no comparison, because the *Courier* was speaking about lines constructed before 1877, while he (Mr. McIlwraith) was talking of contracts taken in 1878. But here was a telegram in the *Courier* of the 17th August, showing that there were contracts for 100 miles of railways in 1878, and that the cost per mile was £5,067:—

“Contracts for 100 miles of railway extension have been recently entered into. The cost per mile, fairly equipped with rolling-stock and fenced all the way, will be £5,067.”

In answer to this, the honourable member said, “True it is that there are contracts entered into this year, but these include the purchase of land.” He (Mr. Garrick) had always taken the honourable member's remarks about railway construction with a great deal of confidence, but for the future he should have to look into them, for he had shown him to be wrong, and should use all the more circumspection because the honourable member was an expert.

Mr. McILWRAITH said that if the honourable gentleman wished to talk against time, he was willing to move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he would ask any honourable member whether railway contracts included the payment for land to be resumed. It was as distinct from the contract as anything could be. The one was

a definite total; the other was a sum to be settled by arbitration.

Mr. McILWRAITH said if the honourable gentleman thought he had answered him he was very much mistaken, and he would undertake to say there was not a single member in the House, besides himself, who thought that he included the cost of rails. He might insist that the committee should come to a division, but if the Government meant to talk against time, let them adjourn. He and those on his (the Opposition) side were perfectly ready to take a division.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS repudiated any idea of obstructing business. The honourable member made a statement, and he thought it necessary to answer that statement at once.

The COLONIAL TREASURER was understood to say that as it was considered desirable that the Minister for Works should have an opportunity of replying to the charges that had been made, he would move that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he wished to draw the attention of the House to the extraordinary way in which the Government managed their business. It was not ten minutes since he made an arrangement with the Premier to take a division on this item and then adjourn, and now it was proposed to adjourn at once. If this course were taken for the alleged reason that the Minister for Works meant to get up a speech in reply to certain strictures that had been made, there was a good deal of occasion for it, because there was a good deal to answer. But that that was the real reason he (Mr. McIlwraith) had grave reasons to doubt. They had sat an hour later than usual to get on with business, and now they were obstructed by the Government as they were last night.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said serious charges had been made against the department of which he had charge, by the honourable members for Aubigny and Maranoa—charges that he was in a position to prove had no foundation whatever, and he would not be justified in allowing a division to take place until he had an opportunity of explaining the matters referred to.

Mr. McILWRAITH said the division would not prevent the Minister for Works from making any explanation he wished afterwards, whenever he pleased.

Mr. THOMPSON said the Government should not interfere and stop business every night when honourable members on that side were willing to go on. He never saw such extraordinary tactics.

The PREMIER said there had been a great deal of talk on both sides, and it was now considerably past the usual hour for adjournment. He thought the Government

should have the conduct of their own business, and although there had been a great deal of time wasted, he could not admit that it had been on the part of the Government.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was quite right that the Government should have the conduct of their own business, but they should not break faith with the Opposition. It was arranged that they should take a division and adjourn, and instead of that they proposed to adjourn at once.

The PREMIER said there was no breach of faith. He had hoped that they would be able to come to a division and said so, but it was during the time the honourable member for Aubigny was speaking, and he could not be responsible for the introduction of new matter into the debate. Under the circumstances, he could merely endeavour to approach as nearly as possible the convenience of the House itself.

Mr. THOMPSON said, why did not the Premier say at once that he was in the hands of the Minister for Works?

Mr. IVORY said this was not the first time the Premier had made a grievance about the conduct of business and committed a breach of faith. He systematically did it. He made a positive bargain with members on that side of the House that so and so should be done—notably in a case in which he (Mr. Ivory) was concerned a short time ago, when he promised that a certain course of action should be taken—and distinctly broke it. It had been repeatedly done, and he said it did not become the Premier of the colony to make an agreement and then depart from it. As the honourable member for Bremer said, he was in the hands—a mere puppet in the hands of the Minister for Works.

The PREMIER said the honourable member was very excited, but he (the Premier) could only endeavour, as far as possible, to conduct business in proper form. He did not pretend to any such tyrannical mode of government that had been attributed to him on this and previous occasions by the honourable member for Burnett. He must consult, to a great extent, the convenience of his colleagues and those who supported him, and of the House itself.

Mr. MURPHY said serious charges had been made against the department of the Minister for Works, which he believed that honourable gentleman would be able to refute, and it was only fair that he should have an opportunity of doing so.

Mr. BJOR asked what was the use of members of the Government and their supporters getting up and saying the Minister for Works was entitled to a reply when it did not affect the question before the House? The honourable gentleman could make a reply at any time after a division was come to.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the Premier said he was obliged to consult the convenience of

his colleagues and supporters, but he should do so before he made an agreement with the leader of the Opposition. He had committed a distinct breach of faith, and he did the same last night.

The PREMIER said he felt obliged to rise—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Chair, chair, order.

Mr. MACROSSAN: You may speak when I have done.

The PREMIER: I rise to order.

Mr. MACROSSAN: I am in possession of the chair.

The PREMIER: I rise to order.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

The PREMIER: The point of order is that a distinct breach of faith has been imputed to me.

Mr. WALSH: That is not a point of order.

The PREMIER: I think when a breach of faith is directly imputed to me, in my position here, it is a breach of order.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the leader of the Opposition had stated that the Premier arranged with him to take a division on this question and then adjourn, and immediately after his colleague, the Colonial Treasurer, moved the Chairman out of the chair. Was not that a distinct breach of faith with the leader of the Opposition? The Premier did the same thing last night, and had done so repeatedly this session; and he (Mr. Macrossan) asserted that the Government had obstructed the business of the House during the last four weeks far more than the Opposition had done.

The PREMIER said the honourable member for Maranoa came over to him shortly before half-past ten o'clock, and intimated that it was time to adjourn. He (the Premier) agreed with him, and at half-past ten it was his intention to adjourn, and to endeavour, if possible, to secure a division; but he did not guarantee to come to a division at any time. It was impossible for him to do so, seeing that honourable members on either side could talk against time for hours if they pleased; but he undertook to adjourn as soon as possible after half-past 10, as it had not been considered desirable this session to sit past that hour. In fact, the honourable member for Port Curtis had declared that he would obstruct business if they attempted to do so; and after the whole evening had been spent in talk, a great deal of which was irrelevant, it was most unfair to turn round and accuse him of a breach of faith because he could not secure an immediate division. He could not do so.

Mr. McILWRAITH said he never asked the Premier to guarantee to come to a division. The agreement he made was to end the business by taking a vote on this item,

and then adjourn; and if he saw any cause, outside the Ministry themselves, to prevent a division being come to, he would hold the Premier absolved from that agreement. But the cause was in the Ministry themselves. When the Premier proposed to adjourn, about half-past ten, he pointed out that it was inconvenient to adjourn in the middle of a vote, and said if the Premier would try to stop talking on his side, he (Mr. McIlwraith) would do the same on his, and they would adjourn as soon as they got this vote.

The PREMIER said it was too bad to accuse him of a breach of faith because he could not always quite approach what the honourable gentleman desired. He did his best to stop discussion; but he was not the despot he had been described to be, and, although he did approach the honourable member for Aubigny in the hope of inducing him to draw his remarks to a close, that honourable member went on addressing the House. All that he committed himself to was to endeavour to adjourn the House as soon as possible. He had met with a good deal of civility from the honourable gentleman, but it was very objectionable indeed that he should be accused in the unmannerly way in which he had been accused by the honourable members for Kennedy and Burnett of breach of faith. He could not be convicted of such a charge. It was beyond his power to command the absolute course of business, because there were honourable members who chose to act an independent part. As far as his personal influence went, he did his best to secure the object which both had in view.

Mr. McILWRAITH said it was in the Premier's power to have brought about a division long ago.

Mr. IVORY said the Premier should give up making agreements with this side of the House if he could not command the allegiance of his supporters.

Mr. MACROSSAN said it was no doubt unpleasant to be accused of breach of faith, but it was a much more unpleasant thing to be guilty of it.

The PREMIER: But it is untrue.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the obstructions to a division had come from the Ministry, and not from the Ministerial supporters, and, therefore, the Premier must have meant that he was not responsible for the conduct of his colleagues. If that were so, the sooner he resigned the Premiership the better it would be for the progress of public business.

Mr. WALSH wished to remind the Premier of the peculiar position he had placed himself in. If the committee refused to move the Chairman out of the chair, there was only one course for the Premier to pursue, and that was to go to Government House the first thing to-morrow morning.

Question—That progress be reported—put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS was proceeding to answer the charges that had been made against the department, when—

The CHAIRMAN called the honourable gentleman's attention to the 278th Standing Order, which provided that—

“When a motion is made in committee of Supply to reduce any item of a vote, a question shall be proposed from the chair for omitting or reducing such item accordingly; and members shall speak to such question only, until it has been disposed of.”

The question before the committee was that the item objected to be reduced by £50.

Mr. BEATTIE did not think it would be an infringement of the Standing Orders if the honourable Minister for Works gave his reason why the salary of the chief clerk should not be reduced. After the charges that had been made against the department it was only fair that the honourable gentleman should be given an opportunity of replying.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it would be a gross act of injustice for the committee to reduce the chief clerk's salary. He had been fourteen years in the service, and had discharged his duties honestly and faithfully; and because he had perhaps given offence to the leader of the Opposition, who seemed to have an antipathy against him—

Mr. McILWRAITH rose to say that if he were to meet the officer in the street to-morrow he should not know him. He repudiated that he was actuated by the motive of personal dislike, and considered it beneath the dignity of a Minister to make such an imputation. He had never heard a word against the officer, and believed from all that he had heard about him that he was an efficient clerk.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the honourable member had, at any rate, asserted that the department was disorganised and expensively conducted. The honourable member himself was in charge of it for some time, and a greater mess in its management was never made than during that period.

Question—That the item objected to be reduced by £50—put.

The committee divided—

AYES, 11.

Messrs. McIlwraith, Walsh, Macfarlane, (Rockhampton), McLean, Macrossan, Groom, Beor, Perkins, Ivory, King, and J. Scott.

NOES, 8.

Messrs. Dickson, Douglas, Garrick, Miles, Griffith, Tyrel, Beattie, and Murphy.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. McILWRAITH asked whether the business was not to stop now?

The PREMIER said it might be convenient, if there was no further discussion, to pass the vote and then adjourn.

Mr. McLLWRAITH: There is to be further discussion.

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

The House adjourned at twenty-nine minutes after 11 o'clock.