

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 13 AUGUST 1879**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 13 August, 1879.*

Bathurst Burr Destruction Bill.—Petition.—No-Confidence Motion—resumption of debate.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## BATHURST BURR DESTRUCTION BILL.

The necessary recommendation from the Governor for the required appropriation for this Bill having been received by Message,

Mr. GROOM presented the Bill, and it was read a first time, ordered to be printed, and the second reading fixed for to-morrow.

## PETITION.

Mr. GARRICK presented a petition from Residents of Sampson Vale, against the Divisional Boards Bill.

Petition received.

## NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. BAILEY said that perhaps the most satisfactory portion of the speech of the Premier was when he stated that

"I cannot say too plainly that it is not the intention of Government to launch their loan all at once; it is not their intention that Government shall have any large sums of money at any time in the possession of any bank, either in this or in the other colonies. Their distinct plans are to have nothing more than sufficient money to carry on public works; and I do not think, in spite of what the hon. gentleman had said, that we shall have at any time such large balances as the late Government has constantly had in the banks for the last three or four years."

That announcement would relieve the minds of many hon. members on his (Mr. Bailey's) side of the House, and of the public outside—for a great dread had taken possession of a large portion of the inhabitants of the colony, and there was that which might have been termed an unjustifiable suspicion that the sole policy of the Government was to borrow money, not for public works but for a very different purpose. There was an unreality about the Loan Estimates which supported that assertion, and it was felt that they were to be the pretence on which money was to be borrowed for the purpose of increasing the resources of a limited liability bank, and to bolster it up. It was therefore a great relief to public opinion that the Premier had made the statement he had, that only such amounts would be borrowed as were absolutely needed for public works under construction. But when the Government were defending their policy they, during this session, generally did so by attacking the deeds of the

late Government. He hoped to see an end to this course of tactics. The late Government, whatever their faults, had been punished by the verdict of the country, and it was an unmanly thing of the party in power to be continually attacking their predecessors for misdemeanours they might have committed when in office. That they had made blunders he was not there to deny. The country had passed its verdict on them, as it also would on the present Government when their time came, as come it would, and with a similar result. Before a proper tribunal the present Government would be tried in just the same manner as their predecessors, and, if found wanting, would come to the same end. But to be continually harping on what the last Ministry had or had not done was unmanly, and these attacks should not be imported into every-day debates. The Government should remember they were on their defence;—it was not their position to take up the rôle of attackers, that belonged to the Opposition. It was the province of the Government to defend their position in every justifiable way, but it was also their province to let bygones be bygones, and show that they were capable of better things. The policy of continually attacking the faults of the late Government came with a bad grace from them, for no later than the previous evening they boasted that they were the authors of the extravagances of the late Government. They said that was a "squeezable" Government; that they did what they liked with them, and when they plunged the country into debt the then Opposition now boasted it was they who made them do it. Who, then, was responsible for the condition of the colony and the people now?—was it the late Government, or was it the men who had made this boast that they had forced a squeezable Government to do as they liked—that they had sacrificed the country for the sake of their party, and compelled the Government into a career of extravagance of which the country and the late Government repented now? It would have been better and more decent if they had not been so ready to make themselves responsible for that extravagance. Instead of making a boast, it was, in reality, a miserable confession that the unfortunate people of the colony were ground between the two mill-stones of a virulent Opposition and a squeezable Government, with the consequences of deficiencies, liabilities, and debt at present. The responsibility rested with those hon. members equally with the late Government, and the country would punish them as soon as it got the chance of doing it. He objected to view this subject with the eyes of the ordinary politician. Politicians who were accustomed to soar in the Treasury

in ether over the heads of the taxpayers were a very nice class and very abstruse in their theories; but he (Mr. Bailey) would like to deal with the matter in a more common-place, sober, everyday manner. These politicians were many of them drones in the busy hive of the people; they made all the buzzing, while the poor industrious bees were hard at work, making honey for themselves and for the drones as well. He took the ordinary taxpayers' view of the Loan Estimates, not that taken by the professional politicians. It was the people who placed hon. members there to look after their interests, and not after grand ideas and abstract questions. As an instance, he remembered an hon. member who mooted the abstract principle that no colony was a first-class colony unless its Governor had £10,000 a-year, and that to make this a first-class colony that sum should be voted, but he forgot that the people would have to pay the £10,000. The colony was the term for a grand entity—the people were, in his esteem, a nonentity. Ministers appeared to be going on the same principle: they forgot that they were not only the guardians of the public purse but of the public welfare; their duty was not only that they should extract as many taxes as possibly could be extracted from the people. They might perform great financial feats in so doing; but their duty was as much to look after the welfare of the people as to show an ability to tax them, and the Ministry which avoided that duty put aside the first and paramount duty for which they were placed in office. Ministers were not merely representatives of tax-collectors. It was not for them to consider how they could make the man who worked pay as much as the man who did not work, but rather how they should develop the industries of the colony, how they should increase its productiveness, and create a prosperous and happy people. That was the last duty the present Government seemed to have taken upon themselves. With their policy the debt was to be enormously increased; and yet while that was done—and the Government said that this was a splendid country, of infinite resources and possessing numerous mining districts with gold, silver, copper—here comes in the amazing paradox: they were told by actions, as well as by words, that it was a country where a white man could not earn his living—that all the country required was, that men of capital should go out west with their kanakas to make money; but that on the coasts of this colony, where the people were settled, white men should not be allowed to make a living. To carry out this wretched theory, these men in the coast districts, who had made the colony what it was, were to be

persecuted, and to be taxed with an extraordinary taxation, in order to enable the present Government to build up a bastard western aristocracy. This was the paradox presented to the English money lenders—that the colony really could not support any more white men; that, therefore, they had been compelled to stop immigration, they had had to drive their skilled mechanics from our shores, and now tell the world that the coast districts were worthless, but that sheep would thrive in the far west. With this paradox, the Government asked for loans on the pretence that railway extension out west would cause close settlement—he supposed of kanakas and sheep; but the people of the coast districts were to become securities for this loan. The farmers, too, were to be driven out of the colony. Even their roads, which had hitherto been made out of revenue to which they had contributed, were in the future to be made by themselves, so that their moneys should now go towards paying the interest on the loans for railways into the “never-never” country. Could any other reason be given why these men should be called upon to bear these extra burdens from which no other classes of the community would suffer? And what did this Government say to the miners?—“So long as you pay your taxes you are quite welcome to get gold, but as to assisting you in any way, we want railways to the ‘never-never’ country. Go you, pay your taxes, and get your gold if you can; but we want railways into the western country, and shall give them all the fostering help we can before we can give you one single pound towards assisting you to discover what is below the surface of the earth.” No; what are really the very first interests of the colony are not to be assisted and developed in any way; but these gentlemen out west must have their water supply, and their 390 miles of extra railway, in addition to the hundreds of miles they had already. The miners were not likely to thank the Government for this kind of assistance. Wherever fifty or sixty hard-working men were gathered together mining, they were doing more good to the country than half-a-dozen stations; but how were they treated? He knew men in his own district who had been slaving for months to develop a small gold-field, but up to this time they had not a road to help them. The Minister for Works did give them £50, but afterwards he reduced the wages of a poor widow gate-keeper by 5s. a week, and the miners would not thank him for exercising his policy of retrenchment upon this poor woman. Those men were still there in the heart of a rough and rugged scrub, trying their best to develop the reefs they had discovered; but there was as little sign of a road now as on the day they first

went there; and if they asked the Minister for Works to give them a road, he would tell them there was no money: when the hon. gentleman, however, was asked for a railway to the "never-never" country, he had a far different answer. Of course, there were times when men spoke what they thought. On the Opposition side of the House members generally spoke plainly, but there were times on the Ministerial side when members did not say, perhaps could not say, all they thought. He proposed to give his reasons why he had very little confidence in the Loan Estimates brought down by the Government, and why he considered that the explanation given by the Colonial Treasurer, last evening, was eminently unsatisfactory. The present Colonial Secretary, in speaking upon this very question in 1876, said—

"Sir, I look with abhorrence at the proposition before us—a proposition which no sane man can think will be carried out. I defy any man to show how the construction of seven lines of railway in a sparsely-populated country like this can be carried on at the same time: the idea is utterly absurd, and I am sure will lead to ruin, or something very close to it. And what comes to avert that ruin? Increased taxation, as a matter of course. I would ask hon. members opposite if they are prepared for that, for they must look the thing fairly in the face?"

At the present time, instead of seven, there were about thirteen lines of railway proposed for construction—namely, seven branch lines, three extensions of trunk lines, and the railways in course of progress. If the hon. gentleman looked with abhorrence in 1876 at a scheme for seven railways, how was it that he looked with gratification upon the present scheme for building thirteen lines? The same hon. gentleman said in another part of his speech—and this might excuse the position he now took up—

"I do not believe one member of the Government thinks of carrying these railways through simultaneously;—where is the labour to come from? Why, sir, all the immigration votes they are likely to have for the next seven years would not pay for bringing the navvies required to make those lines."

The hon. gentleman had, however, very much changed his opinion by this time. Where was the labour to come from at the present time, when the Government were driving it away as fast as they could? Where would they find it when they wanted it? As the hon. gentleman said in the speech referred to, the immigration vote for the next seven years would not suffice to bring out men enough for the several lines. Later on in the same debate, Mr. Macrossan, the present Minister for Works, said he did not agree to the railway scheme then proposed, and his special objection was to Northern railways. The hon. gentleman gave his reasons for ob-

jecting to those railways, and he (Mr. Bailey) would ask the hon. gentleman whether the same reasons did not apply now? How could any Northern member care to ask (the hon. gentleman said) for financial separation after having accepted this railway to Charters Towers, which the late Government, in a fit of extravagance, caused to be made? That was a very good objection, so far as it went; but why did not the Minister for Works raise it now? The hon. gentleman said—

"How can any northern member, how can I myself, dare to ask for financial separation, after having accepted this railway, which would be constructed upon a principle diametrically opposed to financial separation? It would deprive me or any future member for the Kennedy, or any northern member, of the opportunity of lifting up our heads to demand justice for that portion of the country, because we should be accepting a railway which would entail an expense, not only upon the different portions of the colony with which we had nothing to do, but upon that portion of the colony which has borne the largest amount of injustice with regard to railway construction. I should be voting for a great expense upon the whole district of the North, which would not be benefited by the construction of this railway, and I, therefore, stand here to say that if I considered this scheme a real one, which I do not—for I regard it as a delusion—I would not be prepared to accept it at the expense of financial separation."

Did the hon. gentleman consider the railway schemes now before the House in any sense real? If that doubt were applied to his own Loan Estimates the suspicion would be a good one; for the railways then proposed were real and were carried out, and those proposed now were not nor likely to be. Then, again, said the hon. gentleman—

"I would not be prepared to accept it at the expense of financial separation."

Was it not a singular thing that the House heard nothing from the hon. gentleman now about financial separation? A Bill was brought in, but it had gone into a back corner, out of the way. He might, therefore, well ask, where was now the policy of financial separation which caused the hon. gentleman, in 1876, to reject a railway rather than do without his pet scheme? No one was more anxious and earnest to see financial separation than he (Mr. Bailey); but he had never said, whatever he might have meant, that he would sacrifice the interest of his district rather than his pet scheme should be left out. The hon. gentleman, nevertheless, must have had his doubts satisfied in some marvellous way—doubtless by accepting a portfolio. The hon. gentleman further said, on that same occasion—

"Then, sir, I have not a word to say against the making of other railways; but what I insist upon is this, that the people of the North

—the people who have hitherto been called upon to pay the cost of the construction of railways both in the North and in the South—should in no way be asked to pay any portion of the expense of making railways in the Wide Bay and Burnett district or in the Stanthorpe district. That they will be so called upon is evident from the speeches on the other side of the House. They will not stay till the land is sold—no! The money is to be borrowed first; and where is the interest on that money to come from; or, where is the cost of construction to come from?”

But he would ask the hon. gentleman how had he got these doubts solved since that time? Where was the interest of the present loan to come from; and where was the cost of construction to come from? On the same question of railway extension, on the 8th November, 1876, he found the present Colonial Secretary, then in opposition, saying—

“Before they voted away money in this headlong manner, he thought it was the duty of members of the House to satisfy themselves that there was a reasonable prospect of the lines being remunerative. They had merely been given a very rough idea of what the lines were likely to cost; and, from their experience of the construction of lines in this colony, they knew they invariably cost a very much larger sum than they were expected to cost. Honourable members were now committing themselves to an expenditure he was sure they did not know the end of.”

He (Mr. Bailey) would ask the House what was the difference between then and now? What had changed the hon. gentleman's opinions? Were members not asked now to vote money away in a headlong manner? Had they had any opportunity of knowing that these lines would be remunerative? Had any information been given about the surveys or actual cost?—not one jot or tittle; but there had been ten times less information than was given by the then Government to the House. The policy they condemned then the present Government were now carrying out with ten times more faults than the policy they then attacked. At that time, moreover, there was a prophet in the House. Prophets were very good things in their way, especially when they caused no loss. The prophet, in that debate, prophesied—

“It should be the part of honourable members on the Government side of the House to consider that they were not always going to be on the Government side, and the Government should remember that they might have successors, and that the example they were setting that evening might be followed by some other Ministers, perhaps more unscrupulous than they were.”

He (Mr. Bailey) had the honour to inform the House that the prophecy had at last come true, and that the prophet was no other than Mr. Macrossan himself. That prophecy had been exactly verified by the

conclusion of the prophecy and the facts to be seen upon the Loan Estimates. He would like, also, to show what a very strong supporter of the present Government said upon the very moderate proposal made by the Government of that day. Mr. Walsh, who was then a fervent admirer and staunch supporter of the present Colonial Secretary, said that the House was asked to sanction a great crime;—a crime which would plunge the colony into irretrievable disaster. Mr. Walsh said—

“No sane man, with resources at his command which this colony had, would think of rushing into the construction of six or seven railways at once. But, unfortunately, our politics necessitated this great crime.”

And the very same reason might be urged to-day. He now came to another prophecy, and it was a curious thing that it was Mr. Macrossan, again, who profitably played the part of prophet. He said—

“He would ask hon. gentlemen to consider for a moment the dangerous position they were placing themselves and all future Parliaments in. There might be other Ministries in existence in this colony at some future period who would cling to office as tenaciously as the present one, and who might have even a grander scheme than this to flaunt before the public.”

That was a very good word, indeed—flaunting a scheme! The hon. gentleman had truly flaunted before the public a grand scheme; but it had not the merit of the scheme of 1876—namely, the merit of reality. The other was a plain workable scheme intended to be carried out, and was now actually being put into effect; but there was not a single Minister on the Treasury bench of to-day who would dare tell the House that these thirteen railways would ever be carried out by them, and there was not one of them who would dare prophesy that they would even commence them. Half of them had not begun to be surveyed yet, and all that could be seen of them was their names, with a long array of figures at the end of them, and that would be, probably, all that the House would ever see of them. The hon. gentleman indicated exactly the course he now pursued in the following words:—

“But that hon. gentleman might have gone still further—he might have said that the Government were very seriously to blame for having delayed giving them the necessary information with regard to these railways until the very last moment.”

In these words the hon. gentleman had exactly, when in Opposition, told the House, as a crime in his opponents, what he had actually done as a member of the present Ministry. Let the House now consider the words of another member of the present Ministry, a gentle-

man then in Opposition (Mr. Buzacott), who said—

"He maintained that any attempt to carry out a railway scheme of the dimensions of the scheme now before the House must inevitably lead to the entire suspension of railway construction. If the Government wished to carry on railways steadily, and the colony to progress safely, they would have taken up one or two lines and carried them on to such an extent that they would have become fairly reproductive."

It was possible these very estimates were brought in according to Mr. Buzacott's idea, in order to suspend railway construction altogether by the very immensity of the scheme. The hon. the Premier, in the same debate to which he (Mr. Bailey) had been referring, after mentioning that he did not believe the Government intended to go on with the whole of the loans proposed at once, said—

"Such a power ought not to be thrown into the hands of any Government as to construct or not, as they chose, lines sanctioned by the House, and those lines only should be sanctioned which they really intended to go on with. In short, the whole of the railway policy had been devised in order to keep a certain number of hon. members on one side of the House."

Would the Premier repeat those remarks to-day? He might do so, and very justly. But if he would not repeat them, he (Mr. Bailey) would use his words and say, that power should not be put in the hands of the Government to deal with a lot of railways which they did not intend to construct and had not the power of constructing for many years to come, and that to be able to do so was to have a very improper power placed in their hands. He had only one more quotation, and that was from the speech of the present Colonial Secretary. On the 7th of August, in the same year, the hon. gentleman said—

"If we are to be expected, in the short space of five minutes, to make ourselves acquainted with engineers' reports which might have been put into our hands several days ago, I say it is too much for any Government to expect of us, and that it is evident that the Government do not intend to let honourable members make themselves acquainted with what the opinions of their engineers really are. I charge the Government with wilfully and deliberately keeping members of this House as much as possible in the dark upon this subject. We have been favoured by the Minister for Works with his opinions as to how these lines will pay; but I can only say that I would not give three farthings of the very worst copper ever coined for that gentleman's opinion. It was his clear duty to have shown the House how he arrived at the conclusion that these lines will pay interest on the cost of construction."

He (Mr. Bailey) would now ask the House, had any one of these conditions been complied with? Had there been any engineers'

reports? The House had been told that there were engineers' reports sent in, but that the Premier had put them aside because he was going to be his own engineer-in-chief, and alter the reports as he pleased. Where the Engineer-in-Chief reported that £5,000 or £6,000 a-mile would be the cost, the Premier promised to make the line for £3,000; but he did not tell the House how he would do this—not the least information was given, and there was no other authority but his own which, it could not be expected, members on the opposite side of the House would take without hesitation. There was no information, not only as to the cost of construction, but as to the paying qualities of these lines. Members were merely shown a sheet of paper with a number of names of places and large sums of money opposite them. Could it be expected that, under these circumstances, they would be prepared blindly to vote that the country should be saddled with this new loan of three millions of money, and that the taxpayers should be forced to pay for the interest, though it was apparent they would get no return for the outlay? And then came the question—who was borrowing the money?—was it the Government? No. The money was to be borrowed by the taxpayers, not by that House nor by the Government. Every man who worked for his bread with his hands, and had property in the colony, would be mortgaged in order to furnish the funds to carry on these works. There was no place in Queensland where they could coin money out of nothing. Every shilling spent had to be worked for and earned; and, in considering this question, it was a very important fact to bear in mind that it was not the kanakas and squatters out west who would have to pay the interest, but the hard-living and hard-working people in the coast districts. The money was to be expended, not where the people were, but as far away from them as possible. The people were not to have the benefit of even common roads, whilst these immense sums of money were to be lavished where the people were not, and where they were not likely to be. Well might the present Government merrily cry—

'Amongst the plundered middle class  
Vain ire may kindle :  
Load the unresisting ass—  
Up goes the swindle.

The duty of a Government taking office under the present circumstances was to have looked carefully over the colony to see where the resources were being developed, and to have done all they could to assist in developing those resources. They should not tell the miners, farmers, and traders that there was no hope for this country but in sheep; that they had determined to put all their eggs into one

basket, and if sheep failed the country would be ruined. It was a shameful disgrace for the Government to say that there was no industry worth assisting, or even worth speaking of, away from the sheep country—that country which, boundless and fertile as it might be now, they would make a desert of in less than twenty years.

Mr. SIMPSON said the hon. member who had just sat down had made a speech occupying nearly an hour, and consisting almost entirely of quotations from *Hansard*; but he had not said one word really condemnatory of the policy of the present Government. He began by saying that the Government wished to borrow three millions of money practically to bolster up a limited liability bank in Brisbane—a most shameful perversion of the truth. The leader of the Government had told the House over and over again that the Government did not propose to borrow this money and place it in the bank; and the hon. member's statement was therefore a perversion of the truth. Hon. members on both sides of the House confessed that if this money was not borrowed at once the country would be brought to the verge of bankruptcy, and the statement that the Government wanted the money to bolster up a bank and assist their supporters was worthy of those hon. members who made it. The hon. member said that the late Administration had been guilty of gross blunders, but that was known to everybody; and that was the reason why the present Ministry was returned for the purpose of turning them out. The principle of forgive and forget, which the hon. member advocated, was very good as a schoolboy's maxim; but it was absurd when applied to the Government of a country. The hon. member said, also, that the present Government, when in Opposition, squeezed the late Government and forced them into extravagant railway schemes; but if the late Government submitted to be squeezed, and under pressure did what they should not have done, and what was dishonest to the country, they ought to have resigned.

Mr. BAILEY, in explanation, said he did not say that the late Government were squeezed by the Opposition in the matter of railway construction—far from it, the then Opposition opposed railway construction as long as they could; but that the Opposition of the day compelled the Government of the day to enter upon various other extravagances to the amount of many thousands of pounds.

The PREMIER said the statement of the hon. member was not an explanation.

Mr. SIMPSON said the hon. member distinctly said that the members of the Opposition squeezed the late Government to get things which the Government ought not to have granted; and if the Government submitted to that they were not worthy of

their position. He was quite sure the present Government would not submit to any such squeezing. The hon. member said that he objected to viewing the affairs of the colony with the eyes of ordinary politicians; but, judging from his speech, he must view them with the eyes of a most extraordinary politician. Then he tried to make a witty remark about the office of prophet being a profitable employment, which the hon. member might have spared himself the trouble of making. No doubt the hon. member was speaking—after a manner a good deal adopted this session—to his constituents, and not attempting to argue the question under discussion. The question for the House to consider, now, was not the construction of this railway or that railway, or any such thing. The present Assembly had been elected by the country to carry out a decided policy in two particulars—first, an attempt to give good government in place of corrupt government; and, secondly, retrenchment and economy. The late Government accepted office when there was a surplus of considerably over a quarter of a million; they remained in office five years; and left behind them a debt of £180,000. They were in office during five of the most prosperous years ever known in Australia; but instead of being able to carry on the Government successfully during that period they overran the constable to the amount of something over £150,000, and the knowledge of that fact made the country return such a decided majority to turn them out. There was no real difference in the policy of the two parties in the House as to the railway or the general policy. The Government which, after five most prosperous years and a buoyant revenue, could not manage to live within their income and ran into debt as soon as bad times came, now threw mud at hon. members on the Ministerial side, and tried to injure the country still further by impeding the Government which their blunders had made necessary. They started railways that ought never to have been started—it was notorious that some of them would not pay, and ought never to have been commenced. Whether the whole of the lines proposed by the present Government would pay, or would be immediately started, was outside the question—he presumed they did not propose to start them all at once. The loan was intended to extend over three years, and at any time during those three years the lines could be started and the Government could act up to the policy laid before the House. The Government found the colony fearfully overloaded with Civil Servants, put into places at random; and because, in doing their duty by administering the resources of the colony to the best of their ability, they reduced the Civil Service, a great

outcry had been raised against them. The Opposition were now pursuing the unpatriotic policy of trying to put difficulties in the way of the Government which their actions had made necessary to the country. The leader of the Opposition, in his speech last night, said—

“If I am defeated on this motion, it will be because a sufficient number of the House prefer to keep the present occupants of the Treasury benches in their places rather than condemn a policy which in their hearts they do not approve of. \* \* \* \* \* The present time is not one in which anyone need be eager to have the responsibility of conducting the affairs of the colony.”

If those were the opinions the hon. gentleman really held, why did he bring forward this motion? Did not he and every other hon. member know that, if he succeeded in carrying it, the Ministry would resign—or did he mean that he moved it with the deliberate hope of being defeated? The Opposition ought to confine their efforts to assisting the Ministry to carry on the government of the colony until they did mean to defeat them if they could. If the leader of the Opposition knew he could not defeat the Government he ought not to have brought the motion forward; but, having done so, he was bound to do his utmost to defeat them. He said—

“I shall be told, no doubt, that this policy is the same as that of the last Government in substance. That is a matter, again, I do not care to discuss. I shall not say whether it is or whether it is not; but I may say that the policy proposed now is, to a great extent, the policy proposed by the late Government with one exception—that the late Government never made it their policy simply to borrow money.”

The only real objection made by the hon. gentleman was that the Government intended to borrow money;—all other matters were skipped over. But if he objected to borrowing money he should say how all the railways and public works in the colony were to be carried on. Were they to wait until the capital of the colony increased, or did he expect to get it from the managers of those banks whom they had heard wanted to conduct the business of the colony? The only source from which the money could be got was the English market, and to that the hon. gentleman seemed to object. He did not say the scheme was bad, but admitted that the policy of the late Government was to construct the main lines and certain branch lines: his only objection was that the Government were going to borrow money. If the Government were not to do so it would be better to stop all railway construction in the colony at once. Perhaps the Opposition thought they could be carried out by the sale of land, in the same way as the Western Railway was attempted to be carried out;

but surely that bubble had burst. The sale of land might go towards paying interest on money borrowed for construction, but it was perfectly absurd to suppose that a sufficient amount could be raised in that way to pay the whole cost of construction. Some hon. members had made great capital out of the immigration question: on one hand they cried out against stopping immigration, and on the other that all the men were being driven out of the colony. The arguments were most inconsistent. If immense numbers of working men were leaving the colony because they could not get work to do in it—though he (Mr. Simpson) was convinced that very few were leaving on that account—what was the good of bringing in more immigrants to increase that exodus? The Government were wise in stopping immigration for a short time, but he hoped the necessity for stopping it would soon cease. The leader of the Opposition showed that he had been very little into the interior when he said that the extension of the trunk lines 130 miles into the western country would not in the slightest degree increase the traffic or revenue. There was no doubt that the extension of the lines 130 miles would greatly increase the traffic; but, if he objected that 130 miles was too short a distance, let him advocate an extension of 500 miles if that would suit him any better. One curious circumstance in the debate was the unanimity of certain hon. members on the Opposition side in considering that the works on the harbours and rivers at Brisbane and Rockhampton, which had hitherto had the lion's share of the expenditure, should be continued, whilst they objected to a slight expenditure on other ports. It happened that most of the members representing Brisbane and the district roundabout, and both the members for Rockhampton, sat on that side. That was the Brisbane and Queen street influence over again, and the people in the up-country districts knew perfectly well what it meant. The hon. member for Enoggera strongly objected to the borrowing of the three millions at one time. What would a bank manager say if a private individual wanted to borrow a lot of money? His first question would be, “What do you owe?” and the next, “How much do you want?” If the borrower said £10,000, and at the end of twelve months went and asked for another £10,000, he would very likely be refused and pulled up with a round turn;—and what was wise in the administration of a private estate was wise in the administration of the affairs of a colony. A Treasurer going to borrow in the London market should be as clear and straightforward as possible as to the probable requirements and the exact position of monetary matters. It was not wise policy to try to hide the amount already

borrowed or the amount that would probably be required. Considering the enormous security the colony could offer in the shape of land, and gold, copper, and coal mines, it was perfectly ridiculous to suppose that the fact of borrowing three millions would frighten the people at home. They might want to know where it was going to be expended, but they would not be frightened by the amount. He did not profess to be very conversant with the mode in which railway surveys were put before the House, but it had been asserted that the late Government always put the working plans on the table before the money was authorised to be borrowed, and that the present Government ought to follow the same practice. That might or might not be the case. They knew, however, that in something like ten months the present loan balance would be expended, and that if there was no authority to borrow before the new lines had been surveyed and the plans approved, the result would be that a long period would elapse during which there could be no loan expenditure at all. It was scarcely necessary for him to say that he was satisfied the extensions of the main lines would pay, but he was very doubtful indeed whether the branch lines would do so—for a very long time, at all events. To the west they had an enormous territory of fine country awaiting occupation. New South Wales was a colony which was frequently held up for their imitation, but how was it that that colony was extending its railway system into the western interior? Seven millions of money had been voted there, part of which was to be applied to running railways to Menindie and Bourke, for the purpose of “tapping” country the traffic of which was carried on by fine rivers. A great deal of the traffic, also, on these rivers was created by Queensland, and he could tell the people of Southern Queensland that the extension of the Southern and Western line out west would obtain a large amount of traffic that New South Wales had lately authorised two lines to compete for. Whether the policy of that colony was wise or not he would not pretend to say; but of one thing he was satisfied, that if the extension of the Southern and Western Railway would not pay, the New South Wales lines would not—and he could speak from personal knowledge of the quality of the country that that extension would tap, and the probable amount of traffic that it would produce. Of the northern extension he had no knowledge, but he felt bound to believe what other people of experience told him—that the traffic which would be created by that line would pay. The present House were bound to give the Government a thorough trial. The Government had scarcely been able to do any

work owing to the obstructive conduct of the Opposition. The House had been sitting for several months, and no work had been done owing to the factious opposition of hon. members opposite. He was certainly prepared to give the Government a good and fair trial. If they could not carry out the policy they had enunciated, and could not administer the affairs of the colony in an economical manner, then it would be time for him to speak out and vote against them. He came to the House to support the Government, and should continue to do so as long as he believed their policy was good for the colony.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS: I shall endeavour to open out new ground in what I have to say, and I hope that I shall not, at any rate, indulge in any strain of recrimination. I propose to deal as much as possible with things as they are at the present time. The motion which we have to deal with has two aspects—one being that of a direct vote of want of confidence, and the other that of a criticism upon the works policy of the Government, and especially upon this loan estimate. In the first place, I shall say a few words upon the former aspect. Of course, it can hardly be expected from me that I should vote otherwise than in the manner I shall to-night, I hope. Placed as we are on the Opposition benches, it is only natural that when we see fit to choose an opportunity of expressing our opinions we should resort to a mode of procedure which is common in Opposition tactics. Exception has been taken by the Premier to the mode of procedure now adopted by my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition; but I do not see why he should do so, for, whatever happens, my hon. friend is doing no harm by endeavouring to express our opinions in the form that has been chosen. It is possible, it is even probable, that my hon. friend's motion will not be carried; and, if it is not, a vote of want of confidence, in my experience, rather strengthens the position of the Government when not carried; so that in this respect, if the Opposition do not succeed, the Premier will have nothing to complain of. On the other hand, if the Opposition do succeed, he would be happily relieved of a serious responsibility which, he says himself, he is not anxious to assume at the present time. For myself, I need hardly add that I have no great confidence in the present Government and their proceeding during the present session; and their policy, as disclosed in these Loan Estimates especially, does not justify me in continuing any confidence which I may temporarily have had in them. It was once said by an eminent leader of party—Lord Beaconsfield—when speaking of a distinguished opponent, that he did not so much respect as he greatly regarded him.

My feelings towards the present Ministry are those of great regard and of watchfulness—an intense feeling that every step which they have taken since in office, and every step they are now taking, deserves and demands my most careful watchfulness. In this sense, then, I may be amply excused for expressing my intention to vote with my hon. friend. I observe, by the way, that in to-day's paper there is an account of a possible Ministry which may be created with great advantage in the old country. If indeed the result of this motion were such as to leave the Premier in doubt as to whether he could carry on the Ministry with satisfaction to himself, if he learnt that he was placed there simply by a narrow majority, it is quite possible that he might be dissatisfied with that position and throw up the reins of power. Under such circumstances, I will admit that the elements of a strong Government do not exist on the Opposition side of the House, and I do not think my hon. friend would cheerfully undertake the task of forming a Government; but I feel convinced of this: if the House could see its way to dispense with the present Government it would cheerfully do so, and that there is a majority in the House who would cheerfully have another Ministry substituted for the present if it could see its way. And in connection with this subject I am reminded of the criticism upon the Earl of Beaconsfield's Government, to which I have already referred. The *Spectator* newspaper, one of the ablest opponents of the Beaconsfield Ministry, refers to an Administration which might be formed by a Mr. Smith, and the pattern of Administration which the *Spectator* points out is a very desirable one, and is thus described—

"What we would fain see for a time—so long as the languid mood lasts in the country—is a Smith Administration; an Administration, that is, of mere good sense and good feeling, by profession modest and elderly, by habit judicious, by principle upright, dreading levity, and abhorring brag."

I wish we could have such a Ministry here, and I believe that such a one could be formed. I believe the good sense exists which might lead to the formation of such a Ministry, free from the entanglements of the past. I speak from my position as an independent member, connected by no other ties than of old friendship and party relationships with my old colleagues; but, as was stated by me at the commencement of the session, not bound to absolute adherence to any party in the House, should the occasion arise for a reconstruction of our whole position. I do not suppose that this motion would lead to such a reconstruction, but I believe there are the possibilities of forming a party not connected with the old parties,

perhaps not altogether composed of new men, but, by the intervention of new blood, able to dispense with the bad recollections of the past, and to start again afresh with new hopes and new views of the future. That is a possibility which may arise ere long. I will not, however, refer further to it. I will abide by the lessons of the past, and look forward hopefully to the future; but this possible Smith Administration of the future in the various exigencies which are here described would be in marked contrast to the present Ministry. The Administration of this Mr. Smith, whoever he might be, would not, at any rate, partake of the qualities which are illustrated in the present Government. To commence with, he would not, as the Colonial Secretary, who sits at the head of the Treasury benches so often is, be so insolent in office. He would not, when we expect something like—

Mr. AMHURST rose to a point of order. The hon. gentleman, who was the first man to object to personal reflections, had applied the term "insolent in office" to the Colonial Secretary.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. gentleman means the words to have a personal application he is bound to recal them.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Under your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I am willing to withdraw the word "insolent," and to substitute "audacious," which has very much the same meaning. The hon. gentleman frequently exhibits an audacity of expression which is unparalleled and unnecessary, and I often regret that his good sense should lead him to adopt the forms of phraseology so common to him. With respect to the head of the Government, I regard him as a man of very great ability and force of will; but I wish he were a little less speculative in politics, and in that sense, also, he is audacious. As to the gentleman who sits next to him, the Minister for Works, I wish, also, that he were also a little less suspicious. He has indicated frequently, during his short tenure of office, that he is saturated with suspicion. I wish, also, we could substitute for him someone else who was less subject to this political vice. I am not quite sure what fault I can find with the Minister for Lands. When not in office, he used to be somewhat truculent in speech; but since he has been in office he has been less so, and, probably, all that I can immediately find fault with is the communication of his opinion on a matter of policy as expressed by him yesterday. He is very anxious that the money which he and his colleagues now ask the House to vote should be put out at interest—that it might earn interest, not necessarily that it should make railways, but that it should be judiciously invested, and thereby earn interest. That seems to me to be a serious fault of the Minister for

Lands—giving us a little light into the motives which have actuated him in giving his adherence to the policy which the Government have propounded. These are sufficient reasons why we could very well dispense with the present occupants of the Treasury Benches, and substitute for them less prominent men, but men more honest in purpose, more amenable to reason, and more characterised by common-sense. I shall endeavour to express my opinion of the present works policy of the Government as found in the Loan Estimates. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government took great exception to my hon. friend (Mr. Griffith) impugning, at the close of his remarks, the honesty of the members of the present Government. No doubt the hon. gentleman did impugn the honesty of the Government, and, as I believe, rightly. However, the incident reminded me somewhat of an interchange of compliments which took place a long time ago between two eminent politicians—so long ago that hon. members may be startled for an instant at my taking them back to it. I think it was Cassius who took exception to Brutus as a bad general. They had between them disposed of the gentleman at the head of affairs in a very summary manner; they afterwards differed, and we find that in a conversation which passed between them, Brutus said to Cassius—

“There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats,  
For I am armed so strong in honesty  
That they pass by me as the idle wind  
Which I respect not.”

That is what the Premier said, in effect, of the hon. member for Brisbane. I hope to prove that the statements of the Premier, as contained in the Loan Estimates, are characterised by the greatest political dishonesty. I hope no exception can be taken to those terms. I feel so strongly that they are penetrated throughout with the grossest political dishonesty that I am bound to attempt to show on what ground I have arrived at that conviction. I shall refer, first, to the Railway Estimates as here set forth. I find that it is proposed to extend 390 miles of railways into the interior at £3,000 per mile, giving a total of £1,170,000. I find that in addition to this there are branch railways. I will not go over the details, for I do not think there is much difference between these and the other lines; they must be constructed on the same lines. I find that the total amount of mileage of railways is 595, and that the total amount of money to be raised for their construction is £1,586,000, which gives an average all round of about £2,700 per mile. That is what the Premier proposes to do, and he is a man of experience. Those proposals will never be carried out for anything like that amount of money, and I intend to give some reasons which I hope will convince

hon. gentlemen before they take this irreparable step—before they take a plunge in the dark—which must lead to disaster; and, if the hon. gentleman succeeds in persuading them to do so, that he has done so upon defective estimates, and that he has knowingly induced them to adopt a policy in this respect which all experience contradicts, and which I cannot help thinking his own experience must most emphatically contradict. What then are we doing at the present time;—what lines are we building, and what are they costing us? I find, taking the Dalby and Roma line, that when completed it will cost us £732,744: it may cost a little less, but not much. The Maryborough line is to cost £320,474, and the Stanthorpe line £349,411. I cannot speak positively as to what the Bundaberg line will cost, but it is estimated at something like £3,500 a-mile. However, for the 270 miles of railway which we are now constructing, the average mileage rate is £5,191. Probably, in this respect, it will be only fair to deduct the Stanthorpe line as a specially expensive one. It will be admitted that it goes through very difficult country; and therefore, taking the estimate of the Roma and Maryborough lines, both of which are being constructed under exceptionally favourable circumstances, the average mileage cost of these lines, as calculated upon the best advice, is £4,592, and we know from our experience that after a railway has been completed the cost for maintenance for some time must necessarily be very considerable. I do not now propose to go into the mileage cost of all our railways; but if it were necessary to go into that it will be found that the cost covers a very much larger outlay than any stated by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. Going to the neighbouring colonies, I find that the latest railways constructed in Victoria have cost an average rate of £5,170 per mile, without estimating the cost of rolling-stock. I take this information from the Commissioner's report of the 31st December, 1877, which will be found in the “Votes and Proceedings” of the Victorian Legislature. I find that the Castlemaine and Dunolly line, 47½ miles, cost £281,021, an average of £5,916 per mile; the Ballarat and Maryborough line, 42½ miles, £250,888, or an average of £5,903 per mile; the Maryborough and Avoca line, 15 miles, £58,969, an average of £3,931; the Sandhurst and Inglewood line, 30 miles, £151,551, or an average of £5,051; the Ballarat and Ararat line, distance 57 miles, £306,428, an average of £5,375; Ararat and Stawell, 18½ miles, £109,156, average £5,821 per mile; Ararat and Hamilton, 66½ miles, £279,582, average £4,204 per mile; Geelong and Colac, 52¼ miles, £280,141, average £5,361; Portland and Hamilton, 54 miles,

£223,508, average £4,139; Wangaratta and Beechworth, 23 miles, £152,332, average £6,623; and Gippsland (in progress), 118½ miles, £619,804, average £5,241. The total amount spent upon railways in Victoria is £2,713,380, being an average of £5,170 per mile on a distance of 524½ miles. These lines are as economically built as the latest information upon railway engineering enables engineers to construct railways. At any rate, I take these figures as the result of experience in that colony. Coming next to New South Wales, I find the cost of the light lines lately constructed, independent altogether of the expensive lines originally constructed in that colony, has amounted to a rate of £7,676 per mile. This will be found in the report of the 12th June, 1878, and it includes land compensation, but not rolling-stock. That is the experience of New South Wales during the last few years. In regard to South Australia, I find in a publication on "the best methods of railway construction for the development of new countries" by Mr. Patterson, being a paper read at the Institute of Civil Engineers on the 14th January, 1879, reference made to railway construction in that colony, with which I believe Mr. Patterson is in some way connected. At any rate, here are the figures showing their experience. In South Australia there are two gauges—5 feet 3 and 3 feet 6 inches—and I shall state the figures in connection with both. The number of miles of the 5 feet 3 inches gauge is 156, constructed at a total cost of £867,163, or an average of £5,541 per mile. Of the narrow gauge there are 191 miles constructed, costing £935,762, or an average of £4,887 per mile. Of railways now under construction on the broad gauge there are 20½ miles, at an average cost of £6,083 per mile; and of the narrow gauge there are 420 miles, at an estimated cost of £2,129,926, or an average mileage cost of £5,071. That is the experience of South Australia. The paper I refer to is a very interesting one on many matters. It led to discussion amongst the members of the Institute, and I see amongst them some who are not unknown to us—Mr. Jetter and Mr. Fitzgibbon. However, this statement, which I would call hon. members' attention to, is the testimony of a man of very large experience, the late President of the Institute, Mr. Charles Hutton Gregory, who, in comparing the cost of railways in England and in the colonies, speaks thus:—

"There were a number of items more costly in the colonies than in England; and if an engineer could keep down the cost of a colonial railway to the amount it would cost in England under ordinary circumstances, with equal requirements, he and his clients would have reason to feel satisfied. To meet the cry for railroads of impossible cheapness there were

inventors who, a little deceived perhaps in their administration for their own children, asserted that if their plans were adopted the colonies would be served by the cheapest possible railways, which would do the largest amount of duty."

That is the very dispassionate statement of a man of very large experience, and I think it is worthy of consideration here. At any rate, I hold that we are justified in accepting these results of experience in preference to the mere bald statement, unjustified by any previous calculation, unjustified by any previous information, unjustified by any plans or sections, and unjustified by any estimates of the possible cost of these railways—I say that we, as a body of reasonable men, are bound, looking at this in the light of experience, to prefer this testimony to the loose, the unjustifiable, and the altogether unprecedented statement we find made in this Loan Estimate, that these railways can be made for definite amounts calculated at £3,000 per mile. If we are reasonable men I say we are bound to criticise those estimates, which I believe there are no grounds for. Take the matter of permanent-way alone, I find in a paper lately addressed by Mr. Stanley to the Minister for Works, on the cheapest mode of constructing railways, he states that in the cheapest line of railway we are now constructing, and I believe the cheapest line that can with reason and safety be constructed, the cost of permanent way alone is something like £1,300 per mile; that is, with rails at 40 lbs., and ballast, if I recollect aright, only 4 inches, and the construction-way about 10 feet. These figures, I take it, are about the minimum that could be applied to the construction of a permanent-way. When, therefore, we hear from the authority of this gentleman, whom we have placed in a position to advise us, and who is entitled to do so both from his experience and professional attainments, that on the cheapest form of railway the cost of permanent-way alone is £1,300 per mile, and that the permanent-way we are now laying costs about £1,700 per mile, I say we are bound to pause before we accept the statement made in the Loan Estimate. With regard to the Western extensions, I have expressed my adhesion to that policy—I intend to say nothing against it; I believe that those lines must be carried out, and that they will be carried out when the proper time arrives, when proper plans and estimates are provided, and when the proper details connected with so great a work are really before us. But, till that time comes, Mr. Speaker, I shall refuse to vote for any one of them. I have unhesitatingly identified myself with that policy; and the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has prided himself that in that respect there can be no difference between us. But, sir, I pride

myself in the belief that there is a very decided difference between us, and that until we know really what we are doing we should be wrong to accept this estimate, which I believe is a most fallacious one. With regard to the Central Railway, we have had some experience, and what has been the cost of that line? I find, on referring to Mr. Ballard's report of the 18th July, 1878, that the cost of that line from Westwood to the Comet is named at £5,900 per mile. I find, also, that Mr. Ballard's estimate for the construction of the railway from the Comet to Emerald Downs is, in the report of the Commissioner of Railways for this year, named at £4,600 per mile. These are facts which cannot be disputed, and respecting which any hon. member can satisfy himself by referring to the originals. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government told us that he had received an offer from Mr. Ballard to construct the extension of the Central Railway at a cost of £3,000 per mile. Is Mr. Ballard going to be a contractor?—I merely put this question for the purposes of argument. Are we to accept this as an expression of opinion on the part of Mr. Ballard that he is prepared to accept this contract and to hand us over this railway for £3,000 per mile, including land and rolling-stock—that, in fact, we are to have the railway completed and handed over to us for that sum? The hon. gentleman has told us that Mr. Ballard has offered to construct the line at that rate, and as against that I have simply to put the cost of the railway from Westwood to the Comet, and the estimated cost by Mr. Ballard himself for the extension from the Comet to Emerald Downs. That seems to me a sufficient answer to any statement which would justify us in expecting that the total cost of further extensions will not be more than £3,000 per mile. The extension from Retreat must necessarily be difficult, crossing as it must the Drummond Range. Though I do not speak from personal knowledge of that country, I am satisfied that the passage of the railway over that range cannot certainly be executed at a less cost than £5,000 a mile, and even that would be good value. I am not here to dispute the propriety of spending this money on main lines of railway for the purpose of conducting traffic through that country, and in order to make available the vast and fertile district which exists beyond; but I am arguing against the fallacious estimates made by the Government, which I believe will not be borne out, and which we should not be justified in assenting to if we believe they are not substantial and real in themselves. Passing to the construction of the extension from Roma, I would really have considered that there would have been something like an honest

demand made. If the hon. gentleman had taken the responsibility which ought to have devolved upon him, he would have said where this line was to go. I should have no hesitation in saying where it should go. I have already expressed my opinion on that—it is merely that of one member of this House—but I have arrived at the conclusion that it ought to go direct west, towards Charleville. In that way we should tap a larger extent of country than we should in any other direction. My hon. friend, the late Minister for Works, has expressed an opinion in favour of St. George.

The Hon. G. THORN: I did not express an opinion with regard to the extension out west. I said I was in favour of a branch line to St. George from Yulebah.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I am glad the hon. gentleman has corrected me. I presume he does not take exception to the western extension towards Charleville; but, in the meantime, he considers that a branch railway to St. George would be preferable. We must, in dealing with these railways, rise a little above the level of mere local prejudices. We have already heard through the public Press the expression of opinion of the people of Roma and Charleville and St. George; but in this respect we can hardly expect to be guided by them. We must be guided by some wider and broader principles than a mere desire for a locality to be benefited by the construction of a railway. We must go further, and see what in the future will give the best results for the largest number of people, in what direction the lines should go, and how the best profit will be realised. I think, therefore, it would have been more becoming and a more statesmanlike course if, instead of merely asking us for 130 miles of railway, the hon. gentleman had told us where this line was to go. At present we do not know where it is to go—whether north, or south, or west. If he had told us that he intended to take it, at any rate, in a known direction, I think I would have been willing to accord him my support. If he had said that the railway was intended to go direct west, to Charleville, I should not have hesitated, under proper conditions which I have described, to have voted with him. With regard to the extension of the Central Railway from Emerald Downs, what is known of that at the present time? Why, even the Drummond Ranges have not been surveyed. Mr. Ballard has told us that the surveys of that line are in arrear because the Drummond Ranges have not been sufficiently examined. If the hon. member at the head of the Government had any real earnestness in this matter, surely he might have devoted some little attention to this, and at any rate have employed surveyors there to ascertain the best route through these ranges. So far

as I am informed at the present time, from the papers we have recourse to in Parliament, the Drummond Ranges have not as yet been sufficiently explored to determine what route the line should take. I find that there have been observations taken through the Drummond Ranges, and that it is said a pass has been discovered which might be made applicable for this purpose; but no definite and final conclusion has been arrived at, and the extension of the Central Railway is just as much in the clouds as the extension of the Western Railway. With regard to the Northern Railway, we are told, also, that there is to be an extension of 130 miles. We have already practically authorised the extension to Charters Towers—for, although the plans and sections have not been approved of for the whole of that distance, there can be no doubt that will be done; but beyond Charters Towers nothing whatever is known. Is it the intention of the Government that this railway should be extended in the direction of Muttaborra or in the direction of our Northern goldfields? Is this extension to proceed to the north-west or the south-west? Of this we are told nothing, and yet we are asked to vote money for the extension of this line 130 miles to a place of which we absolutely know nothing. I now come to the branch lines. The first is from Brisbane to Sandgate, thirteen miles, at £4,000 per mile—£52,000. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has very ingenuously told us that he differed in opinion from the Engineer-in-Chief, and the fact that £4,000 per mile is put down in his estimate indicates that he believes it will be constructed for that amount. As against that we have simply to look at Mr. Stanley's estimate based upon preliminary surveys and estimates, and he tells us that it will cost at least £6,000 per mile without rolling-stock and without the purchase of land. I should consider that upon that estimate the line would more likely cost £8,000 or £9,000 per mile. If it is to be constructed, let us look the thing in the face—let us see what we are going to do—let us not play with the question like children. We are men of experience with heads upon our shoulders, and are capable of reasoning and being guided by experience; and whatever may have been the experience of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government in his professional capacity—and I wish to do all honour to him in that respect—I say we are not justified in accepting his mere statement, in the face of all experience in railway construction, "I believe that this line can be made for £4,000 per mile." We know that a large amount of land would have to be purchased, and that, being in the vicinity of the town, very expensive crossings would

have to be made, and therefore it must necessarily be a more than usually expensive railway. No doubt we will have a railway to Sandgate in due time; but, surely, we are not called upon to authorise this expenditure when we know that the work cannot be done for the amount. The hon. gentleman—referring, I suppose, to the habit of the ostrich—talked about our burying our heads in the sand; but it would be exceedingly like burying our heads in the sand if we were to authorise the construction of a line for £4,000 a-mile, knowing that when the bill was sent in we should have to pay at least £8,000 a-mile for it. With regard to the Ipswich to Fassifern line, 30 miles at £2,500 a-mile, that may be a very useful line, but, being disconnected from the ties which formerly associated me with the hon. gentleman who now leads the Opposition, and without wishing to say anything which will embarrass him and his policy, I am free to express my individual opinion that this line may be one which, under certain circumstances, we should be justified in making. It is not what is called in the slang term a "national" undertaking—it is a convenience for a district, and a district not very populous; and however beneficial it might be to the inhabitants, and however much I should like to see it carried out some day, it is not certainly an urgent work, and I doubt very much whether it can be constructed for the amount put against it. If it could, it would be a very primitive undertaking; and if it is to be constructed, I should much prefer to see that a line of this kind was associated in some way with the district, and that some, at any rate, of the liabilities connected with it should be attached to the district itself. I refer now to the system adopted in New Zealand, and which is said to work very well. Quoting from the same pamphlet to which I have previously referred, I find that, at the discussion which took place, Mr. Tancred, a well-known New Zealand engineer, spoke as follows:—

"Within the last twelve months an Act had come into operation for the purpose of encouraging the construction of branch lines by private enterprise. This Act enabled any district, by a resolution of the majority of the ratepayers, to take lands for railway purposes, and to construct the same, upon their undertaking to make up out of the rates any deficiency to the amount of 5 per cent. on the net profit on capital expended. To this amount the Government added 2 per cent., thus practically making a 7 per cent. guarantee. The Government worked these lines if the constructors so wished. About 150 miles of railway were now being built under this enactment."

That is a principle which it seems to me might, with qualifications, be applied to a

line of this kind; and I would point to the fact that there are still in the district of West Moreton some valuable lands which have not yet been sold or selected, and, if we could not afford to adopt such a policy at present, we could at any rate induce persons who are willing to build such a railway by giving them a portion of the land that is still available. I have viewed with some dissatisfaction the present mode of selling land on conditions; and if we can introduce some such mode as this to utilise land in the outside districts—and that are not on the main lines of traffic—it may be very reasonable and justifiable to do so. This rule will apply to some extent to the Mount Esk railway. I can point to some very suitable land in the vicinity of that contemplated railway on the Brisbane, suited to the purpose; and, until we have something like a guarantee that a line of this kind will really pay, I should much prefer, myself, to carry out the principle to which I have referred, and which is just now being adopted in New Zealand—because I do not think that short distances of railway like this, through a very sparsely-populated district, would be a justifiable undertaking at the present time. I think these remarks may also be applied to the other lines that have been put down as branch railways. In the case of the Maryborough and Burrum line, in which my own constituents are interested, I do not think there is any great claim for the amount the hon. gentleman has put down upon his estimates, for the coal-owners on the Burrum are willing, on certain terms, to provide themselves with a railway on something like the conditions I have described as being applicable to these minor lines of railway. I doubt very much whether the railway to the Burrum alone, as proposed by the Government, would be justifiable. The railway to the Burrum, in my opinion, could only be justified as one step towards the connection between Maryborough and Bundaberg, which would complete the system of railways in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts, and would obviate the necessity for any large expenditure upon the defective navigation of the Burnett. I look forward, at no very distant time, to see these two towns connected by railway, and the railway system in that district will not be completed until they are connected. On that ground, I look upon the proposed railway from Maryborough to the Burrum as a step in that direction. In the meantime, the justification for it would be the opening-up of the coal traffic; and in that sense we are very likely to find that those interested in that traffic will be able to please themselves on terms which the Government are willing to accept. As to the lines from Warwick to Killarney, and from Toowoomba to Highfields, I must candidly

confess that, until the details are before me with regard to these lines, I shall decline to vote for them. In themselves they may be desirable, but there have been no good reasons given to show why we should build them. We have not been furnished with either details or estimates or plans of them, and in this respect they come under the same category as the whole of the railways which are now proposed for our assent. After full consideration, therefore, of these estimates, I have made up my mind that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government must be a man of very sanguine temperament indeed if he supposes that he can justify them. Some poet has described a similar person as—

"A man of cheerful yesterdays  
And confident to-morrows."

The hon. member may be a "man of cheerful yesterdays." I do not think I am, but I am happy to think that he is. He is a man of large experience—a man of the world in every sense, and he is undoubtedly a man of "cheerful yesterdays," but I think he is also in this respect a man of too "confident to-morrows." I judge this from the estimate which he has placed in our hands, under the belief that we will accept it as a *bond fide* one. I know he is desirous to carry out the lines already entered upon, for no one has done more than himself to force this colony into the van of railway enterprise. We are at present standing at the head of all the colonies in the proportion of mileage of railway under construction. It may be that this is a boast; but it is one which is accompanied by some alleviating considerations in the form of a pretty heavy liability at the present time. When the hon. member bandies his accusations that we have rushed the country into an undue expenditure in this respect, I must do him the justice to admit that he has materially contributed to the present position of affairs, whatever that may be—although that position is, I think, one which, in the long run, will justify us in what we have done. Our railway construction has been characterised by very remarkable enterprise up to the present time; but I must say that the works which we are now asked to sanction do not seem justified by the circumstances of the times. We have not yet arrived at that period when we shall be asked to reconsider the policy of our Railway Reserves Bill. The hon. gentleman made it a part of his accusation against me last night, that we had not provided the means of meeting our liabilities. Did we not?—I affirm that we did. What is the hon. gentleman himself now going to do? He proposes, as part of his policy, to make up the deficit of the present year by the application of those very funds which are derived under our Railway Reserves Act. This is a cardinal

point of his policy, and yet he now accuses us of having no plans to meet the liabilities incurred in the formation of our railways; and grounds on that assumed fact that for his railways he is not going to make any provision at all. We, at any rate, provided the Railway Reserves Act, the results of which he is now going to make available for the purposes of this deficit.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is misquoting me when he says that I am going to make use of that money to supplement the deficit of the present year. I never said anything of the sort. What I said was, that we should devote the proceeds in hand from the operation of the Railway Reserves Act to make good the deficit that has accrued last year under the last Government.

MR. DOUGLAS: No doubt the deficit is the result of the operations of last year. I commenced my remarks by stating that the hon. gentleman fairly threw himself open to the imputation made by the leader of the Opposition—that his policy was not an honest one in this respect. I do not think his statement the other night was quite an honest one, when he said we made no provision for the payment of interest. I believe we made ample provision, and that we satisfied the capitalists who loaned us the money that there was not only sufficient security in a direct form provided by the Railway Reserves Act, but that the security of the public honour and the public credit was amply sufficient to justify them advancing that money to us. It was hardly fair for the hon. gentleman to state that, in this respect, we had made no provision, and that he likewise intended to make no provision; really taking the funds which we have provided to make up the deficit which has accrued in this year. He says there is a necessity for us to borrow largely at the present time. Necessity has been said by some great authority to be the argument of tyrants and the creed of slaves. I don't impute to the hon. gentleman that he is a tyrant. He is certainly a little dictatorial, and very fond of having his own way by means of the peremptory arguments of a majority, and this same necessity is the creed—I will not say of his slaves, but—of his followers. I believe it is necessary to complete the works we have at present in hand. Having no responsibility now except what attaches to myself, I will tell the hon. gentleman what I believe will be good for the country to do at the present time. The aspect of affairs is certainly not a very encouraging one. It has been used as a party cry against us that we are responsible for the deficit which has accrued; but, as honourable members well know, it is an insensate and unreasonable cry, and unjustified by facts. The deficits that have accrued in the neighbouring colonies, and the serious

monetary condition of the whole world, justify us in coming to the conclusion that the present position of our monetary and commercial affairs must be ascribed to other causes than that which has been attributed. I admit that in some respects the late Government were faulty, and the hon. member for Wide Bay has expressed himself with admirable force to-night as to what he considered the faults of the late Government. Every Government has faults, has within it the inherent seeds of decay. The Government with which I was connected had been in office for some time, and they had accumulated, during their years of office, the objections which invariably arise in the constitution of any Ministry. In this one respect the Ministry were not strong enough to carry out what I believe to have been a sounder policy. We could without difficulty have conducted the sales of land more effectually than we did to meet the payments that had to be made without injury to public credit or public enterprise under the Railway Reserves Act. We did not obtain all that we might have obtained, and all which, under the circumstances, the country ought to have obtained. We have, at all events, been shown how not to do it; we have been shown how in the presence of defective estimates, of no plans, and of no information of any kind, of the baldest possible explanation of the largest expenditure the Parliament has ever been asked to authorise—we have been shown how not to do it. I will tell the hon. gentleman what we ought to do. We ought to make provision to resume immigration as soon as it can be done advantageously. My objection to the precipitate way in which our action was taken is that we have entirely disconnected ourselves by one sudden wrench with our immigration agency in England. That connection might have been maintained. We might have received a very much diminished number of immigrants during the present year, but still our connection might have been maintained advantageously. As soon as possible, I should like to see immigration revived. I understand from the hon. gentleman's statement that he has some £90,000 still available for immigration purposes, and he asks the House for an additional £100,000 for the same purpose—a demand of which I cordially approve. With regard to the Western Railway extensions, whatever policy may be adopted in the future, when the proper plans, estimates, and specifications are prepared, and when the circumstances of the country justify, I am prepared to support them; but I am not prepared to do so at the present time, and I shall offer every opposition I can to the passage of any one of those proposed votes. With regard to the branch lines, I have

expressed my opinion in such a way that hon. members cannot be in doubt as to my conclusions in that respect. Instead of a line from Brisbane to Sandgate, I would much rather have seen a line connecting the coalfields of Ipswich with deep-water, if a junction could have been made with the railway at some convenient point. It would have been productive of the greatest good to the greatest number, and would have done much to develop our important mineral resources. All the other projects are not sufficiently urgent, and I cannot afford my support to any one of them at the present time. We ought, therefore, to be content with simply carrying out those works now in course of construction. I am quite prepared to authorise a sum for the extension to Charters Towers, which comes within the railway reserves, and which ought to be carried out; but to take it beyond Charters Towers seems to me to be most improper and unjustifiable. I have said what I consider ought to be done under present circumstances, and have given my opinion as to the branch lines; and, in regard to this, I made some reference to the policy pursued in New Zealand in connection with subsidiary lines of railway. I have since been informed by the Minister for Works that the Act I referred to has been repealed and some other provision made. Some provision, however, ought to be made for the additional liabilities incurred by the proposed construction—whether for land in the district where land can be obtained, or from direct concession in some form, I cannot say; but it is, at any rate, certain that some definite provision is necessary before we are ourselves launched in the increased expenditure for the subsidiary or main lines to which Government have referred. Reference has been made by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, and by other speakers, to the policy propounded by the late Government in this respect, and a reference was also made to my address to my constituents, in which I proposed we should go on borrowing money for the construction of such public works as these. I have nothing to withdraw from what I then said, and I distinctly stated that we must look for the construction of these additional lines to some form of the public landed estate which ought to be made productive of more fruitful results than it is. That was the leading principle in connection with all proposals of the kind, and I submit, again, most distinctly, that that must be the leading principle here. If we must incur these liabilities, we must from the public estate and from lauded property obtain the means of paying the interest on the increased expenditure which they involve. Much more will this be the case when we consider our financial position;—and the hon. gentleman at the

head of the Government knows, perhaps, better than I do what that is. I know that we have a large deficit in the past year; I know, according to the light thrown on it by the hon. member for Enoggera, we may—nay, we must—contemplate something very similar in the year before us; and in the light of these facts it cannot be disputed that we should fairly look it in the face, and see whether we are justified in incurring largely increased liabilities unless we are prepared with sure means of finding the interest. In this respect the hon. gentleman was much at fault: if he proposes such an heroic cure for evils as he believes, he was bound to have induced people in this colony to make some sacrifice to obtain the results he seeks; and I believe the people were, and are, prepared to go into some sacrifice in order to carry these works out when it is attempted to carry them out in any practical business-like shape, and which it may be said has not yet been attempted. In reference to the preliminary examination of the country to the westward, of which we have heard so much and of which we know so little, I wish now to refer to a paper laid before Parliament at the close of last session, and which refers to this very question of opening out our vast inland country by railways. It is not a light matter if we decide on a policy which will affect the whole of the future of this colony, and such a question ought not to be rashly decided, and we ought to know the conditions on which we found our future railway extension. I may here say that I had some correspondence with the Government of South Australia in connection with the junctions which might be secured between our railway system and theirs. In that correspondence there is an important letter from Mr. Stanley, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Southern and Western Railway, and I refer now to a letter of his addressed to me, dated August 24, 1878. I had invited an expression from him in respect to this matter, and he forwarded with this letter maps—which had been prepared at my request—to illustrate a general system of trunk lines of railway throughout this colony, and their probable future connection with the railway system of other colonies. I shall not, however, trouble the House with the whole of the letter, but refer only to the concluding paragraph, which contains very valuable suggestions, and which I should be glad to see adopted as soon as possible, and which might very well have been adopted before now. I think that some preliminary steps towards an examination of the western country should have been taken in accordance with these recommendations. Mr. Stanley says—

“With this end in view I would suggest the advisability of initiating some plan of explora-

tion surveys, with the object of furnishing the Government with definite and reliable information as to the physical characteristics of the country which these probable lines would traverse, as a guide in determining the particular route to be followed by any projected line. Such surveys might be effected to a great extent by means of barometrical observations and the fixing of certain points of latitude and longitude; and whilst the cost would be trifling, as compared with ordinary trial surveys, the information obtained would, I believe, prove of very great value in any future consideration of the subject now mooted."

Now, we have not even made these preliminary surveys as far as Charleville, and there are none as far as the Alice, where it is contemplated the Central line will be extended to. There are no surveys of any kind introduced, even with regard to the extension from Charters Towers;—it is not even mooted in the Press. There is no public feeling formulated at all on this point as to where the extension of this line shall be—whether in the north-west or the south-west direction, and therefore I say that until the whole question is put before us we cannot definitely give a final decision. In connection with this, I have already stated in a debate which took place earlier in the session that it seems to be necessary to revise the whole question of our land policy in the western country with a view to obtain an increased revenue for the purpose of carrying on these great works. The occupiers of runs in these great districts will derive immense benefits from the extension of these lines, and therefore they are in favour of them. The hon. gentleman opposite tells us that they are not, but that he himself is in favour of them, and that the run-holders themselves are not. But I believe that if railway extension is made as proposed it must greatly increase the value of their property, and, therefore, I think they should be willing to pay their share towards that construction. I understand that they are willing to submit to a very considerable addition to their rents, if only their modes of communication are improved, and this is only fair. If we understand that they are willing to accept this part of the contract, we shall be in a position to consider this proposal much better and on much more favourable grounds than we are at the present time. I believe that a similar proposal must be considered in connection with our subsidiary lines. A great deal of our land has been sold through which lines will have to pass, and I do not conceive that there could be any source of objection to a proposal to raise a land-tax on these lands, when it is considered how greatly they will be benefited. I believe myself that the landowners of the country will be willing to pay that tax, and that it is sound policy to secure some additional

revenue for such a purpose. I have now said nearly all I wish to say in respect to this matter. In my closing remarks I wish to refer to something that fell from the Premier in reference to some statement made by the leader of the Opposition. The Premier remarked that, up to the present time, the leader of the Opposition had been a fair-weather sailor; but if the hon. gentleman was a sailor worth his salt, he was bound to avail himself of those opportunities of fair weather and to turn them to the best purpose. I believe he did so, and there is no reason to suppose that because he was a good fair-weather sailor he would not be a good sailor in more troublous times. That is the fault of the hon. gentlemen opposite. He now proposes—rough sailor as he would have us to believe he is—in troublous times to stretch his sails more than ever in this troubled season, and to set his studding-sails. But that is not the pilot to whom we should entrust our safety. The sky is threatening, and the waters themselves are dark and drumly. The prospects of the present time are not very favourable, and the hon. gentleman ought to know that this is the time when he has to set things to rights, and to put his ship in order to meet the worst that may possibly befall him. However willing I am to look forward to a better state of things in future, I am not willing to look with indifference to the dangers we may have to confront. I feel confidence in the future; I do not feel much confidence in the immediate future of to-morrow. I may say that however willing we may be to accept this policy at some future time, it is not the right policy at the present time. Let us make the best of our fair weather when we have it; but now the storm signals are flying about, and it is not the time to put on full sail. I, for one, will not encourage the hon. gentleman to pass this Loan Estimate. It must be cut down. The hon. gentleman has made a profession in these Loan Estimates which I believe he is not sincere in wishing to carry out. Whenever we have to carry out such a policy as this, if we are worth the responsibility cast upon us, we should first know something of the real cost which we propose to take upon ourselves before we commit ourselves in the manner which the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government proposes we shall now do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan): The hon. member for Maryborough, with his usual inconsistency of character, began his speech this evening in what, I may say, was a very conciliatory tone, as he began by assuring us that it was not his intention to indulge in any personalities; but in a following paragraph he assailed the members of the Ministry in the most personal manner. I shall not

follow the hon. gentleman's example, but I will remind him that "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones;" and that if he examines his own case for the last twenty years, he will, if he can examine himself conscientiously and fairly, confess that he has been the most ill-advised politician that ever had anything to do with the administration of public affairs in this colony. What is the hon. gentleman's position at the present time, after twenty years' service? He has been a member of various Administrations, and has been a member both of this House and of the other branch of the Legislature, and yet he stands here to-night isolated in politics from all around him. That is very different from the high position the hon. gentleman held last session; and yet this is the gentleman who dares to impugn in a most malicious way the honesty of the policy of the present Government. If the hon. gentleman had confined himself to a criticism of the Loan Estimates of the Government it would have been nothing; but he went beyond that, and indulged in personal attacks upon the members of the Ministry. I shall not say more about the hon. gentleman. I can afford to pass over what he said about myself, and I believe that the other members of the Ministry can afford to pass unnoticed the remarks he made about them. To come to the matter under discussion. The hon. member for North Brisbane has moved by way of amendment—"That the proposals of the Government in relation to the construction of public works are unsatisfactory to this House." I have waited most patiently, and have waited in vain, to hear upon what particular point the public works policy of the Government is unsatisfactory. No doubt, as a general proposition I am willing to admit that the proposals of the Government with regard to public works are unsatisfactory to this House; and I will go further, and say that I do not believe that there ever was a scheme submitted by any Government in any colony that they were wholly satisfied with themselves. Why, the whole conduct of human life is unsatisfactory, and why should we profess to be able to produce a scheme that will be satisfactory to all? I am myself dissatisfied with the scheme, but not on the grounds put forward by hon. members opposite. I am dissatisfied with it because it does not go far enough; but as the hon. member for North Brisbane has often said in regard to his own Government, we have been compelled to cut our coats according to our cloth. I should have liked to have seen a much larger sum proposed for public works without causing people to put their hands into their pockets to pay one shilling more taxation. Now, what was the burden of the song of the leader of the Opposition?

It was that the Ministry wanted to get money, no matter what they intended to do with it: only give them the money and that would be enough. But such has not been the policy of the present Government, as every item on which they propose to expend money has been accounted for in the Loan Estimates; and every item they are bound in all sincerity to carry out. I shall just quote one or two remarks the hon. gentleman made use of last night before I undertake to defend the Government in their public works policy—a task which I believe I am well able to perform to-night, notwithstanding the threat of the hon. member for Maryborough, and in spite of the threat of obstruction used by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. gentleman did not use the word "obstruction," but both he and the hon. member for Maryborough threatened that those estimates shall not pass without being cut down. How can they be cut down by the hon. gentleman if he has not a majority in the House to-night to sanction his proposition? They can only be cut down in that way or by a system of obstruction. The hon. member for North Brisbane, in his speech last night, quoted from the Colonial Treasurer's Financial Statement, as follows—

"While the working-man is free to carry his labour to the best market, taxation solely for the improvement of property should not be allowed to encroach upon his means. The application of Customs revenue to public works would therefore be unjust to a large body of the taxpayers. How, then, is a property-tax to be raised?"

And the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) continued—

"And the answer is—by the mode provided by the Divisional Boards Bill."

Now we have been told time after time—last night, and again to-night—that the people are not prepared to put their hands into their pockets and pay for the making of their own roads and bridges, and we are now told by the hon. member for Maryborough that they can put their hands into their pockets to pay for making railways. If the people are not prepared to discharge the lower duty imposed in every civilized country in the world, with the exception of this and a neighbouring colony, how are they able to undertake the higher duty of paying for the construction of railways? But the hon. member, with his usual inconsistency, forgets the proposition I made in 1876, when he brought forward his bunch scheme of railways. While referring to the bunch scheme, I take the opportunity of correcting the hon. member for Wide Bay in his quotation from my speech, in which he designated me a prophet. He read portions of my speech simply to suit himself. He should

have informed the House that when I mentioned the possibility of a Ministry more unscrupulous than that which then occupied the Treasury benches, I was alluding to the fact of the six railways being bunched together and laid on the table to be swallowed whole or none at all. I never opposed a policy of railway making. We were always in favour of such a policy, but we were opposed to voting for six railways in a bunch—preferring taking each one on its merits, as those should have been taken, and as these will be voted for, I believe. The hon. member forgets that on that occasion I introduced a motion which he and his party banded themselves together to oppose; and he now comes forward with a proposition to bring about the same result as I asked them to endeavour to effect. He has read an extract from a work relating to New Zealand, which I take the liberty of saying is not quite correct. The extract is right as far as it goes, but the hon. gentleman is not aware that a portion of it relates to a New Zealand statute which has been repealed, unfortunately for that colony. In 1876, I introduced an amendment to the effect that in the event of any of those railways then going through the House not paying the interest on cost of construction after paying working expenses, and the sales of land within the railway reserves being also deficient, a tax should be imposed upon all property within the railway reserve—that is to say, within the district benefited by those railways. What was the action of the hon. member for Maryborough? He and his party threw that amendment out; but to-night he wants something similar to be effected because he is no longer in office. He offers advice which is not worth the paper I hold, because he has plainly convicted himself of giving advice that is worthless. He told the Colonial Secretary on a former occasion that he could give him advice in his position of Minister for Public Instruction which he had not the candour to give to his own colleagues sitting by his side when he was a member of the late Government. I never heard anything more unworthy from any Minister or ex-Minister. Are Ministers not supposed to understand one another thoroughly?—are they not as brothers?—and why should the hon. member be afraid to enforce his opinions on his colleagues? Simply because he was too fond of office—because he was prepared to sacrifice the principles he professes to hold rather than resign office. I may just state in relation to the Railway Reserves Act that the hon. member for Northern Downs, who was then head of the Government of which the hon. member for Maryborough afterwards became head, brought in a Bill to make certain railways from the sale of Crown lands; and the hon. member for Maryborough has told us to-night that he could

have carried his sale of land within the reserves under that Act to a much greater extent than he did; and yet in the very same breath he denies to us the power of obtaining interest for railways we now propose, although not confined to any narrow limit, but having the whole wide colony of Queensland to range through for the purpose of selling Crown land. Did ever anyone hear anything more absurd? They proposed to raise sufficient money to construct, and they deny us the power of raising sufficient to pay the interest on construction. He also accuses the Government of being politically dishonest, and of framing estimates grossly and politically dishonest, and the accusation is based on the fact that we propose to construct railways at £3,000 per mile. If we are politically dishonest in making that proposition, what can he say to his leader and late colleague having proposed to construct them for £2,000 per mile? Surely if he can construct them for £2,000 per mile—we must be able to construct them for £1,000 per mile more. I can see no political dishonesty, because we are prepared, in spite of all the quotations read by the hon. member, to carry out our estimates to construct lines at £3,000 per mile. The hon. gentleman has quoted a great number of figures about railways constructed in different parts of a neighbouring colony, and he has proved that railways there have cost various sums from £4,592 per mile upwards. No doubt the quotations are correct, but they are too old. If he had quoted the latest contracts let in Victoria he would have found that a railway was to be made, with rolling-stock added, for a sum under £3,000 per mile. The quotations he read applied to contracts three or four years ago, and does the hon. gentleman imagine that railway-making is at a stand still—that engineers are not finding new modes of construction and improvements to make the cost of construction much less? We have an instance in this colony. We know that lines can be constructed more cheaply now than three years ago, and could be constructed more cheaply three years ago than three years previously. I have proofs of that handy, which I will put before the House by-and-bye. The hon. gentleman in quoting from the report of the Chief Engineer, Mr. Stanley, says the permanent way will cost at least £1,300 per mile, but he forgets that Mr. Stanley is not considering the same kind of construction as Mr. Ballard proposes for the Central Railway. The hon. member is also making his estimates on the cost of rail and iron and steel work for lines at prices which prevailed five or six years ago. Did he not hear me read the other day to the House, in answer to the hon. member for South Brisbane, to the effect that a contract has been let—not one of the imagination—on the Central Railway for

£1,950 per mile, and at the present prices of railway material, and with one station at the end of twenty-seven miles, the whole cost will only be £2,449 per mile, and the permanent-way material will cost £466 per mile? Knowing this, and having other facts in his possession, the hon. member accuses our estimates of being grossly dishonest, because we propose to construct lines at £3,000 per mile. At the present moment I have in my possession an offer from the Chief Engineer of the Northern and Central Railways to construct a line from the 200-mile peg westward to the Alice River for a cost of £3,000 per mile including everything; and that line has to surmount the Drummond Ranges, so that a portion of the line will cost from £8,000 to £10,000 per mile. Knowing that that line can be constructed at such a price, are we not justified in concluding that the Western Railway can be made equally cheap, and the Northern from Charters Towers also equally cheap, being through the same kind of country? The cost of railway-making has been reduced very much in this colony, and the engineers are prepared to reduce it still more. When Mr. Ballard undertook the construction of the Central line from Westwood westward, the lowest cost of any line then constructed in the colony had been £10,000 per mile.

MR. GRIFFITH: Including the Main Range.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Brisbane extension was not over the Main Range, or through the Main Range, or near it. And owing to some unexplained blunders, which it is impossible to fix upon the responsible parties, that line cost £16,518 per mile; but is that any criterion for railway making at the present time? Because the engineers or the Minister for Works made blunders, then, are we to continue making blunders? Are we never to reform our system of railway making? I appeal to the hon. member (Mr. Mackay) whether he does not think we can make railways for £3,000 per mile? He will not, I am sure, say that this estimate is grossly dishonest. He believes that railways can be made for a less sum; and he is quite correct. When Mr. Ballard undertook the construction of the Central line the portion which had been built cost £9,581; but he carried the line over the Goganjo Range and onwards to the Comet, a great portion being more difficult than the country between Rockhampton and Westwood, at a cost of £5,923 per mile. Having reduced the cost of construction nearly £4,000 per mile, he now proposes to reduce it nearly £3,000 per mile more, and I believe he will be thoroughly able to do so. These facts remove the accusation of dishonesty, and show that we were justified in putting down the estimate for railways at £3,000 per mile. The country beyond

Roma is easier, I believe, than the country beyond the contract on the Central line, and the country beyond Charters Towers is equally as easy for railway making as any in Queensland, and I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that I believe that every mile of the Charters Towers line, from the commencement at Townsville to the extension of 130 miles, including bridges over the Burdekin, Reid, and other rivers, will not cost more than £3,000 per mile; and in putting down this estimate the Government, so far from being guilty of gross dishonesty, are doing their duty to the country in making railways as cheap as they can be made consistent with stability and suitability. But what does the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) say concerning the Northern line? I have often accused him and the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) with a want of sincerity in the construction of this line, and I have never been able to disabuse my mind of that idea, and their conduct last night and to-night confirms my belief in their insincerity. The hon. member (Mr. Griffith) says that the making of a line to the moon would be no more absurd than making a line to Charters Towers.

MR. GRIFFITH: I said nothing of the kind. What I did say was, that making proposals for a railway to the moon would hardly be more absurd than to ask for a loan of £400,000 to make a railway from Charters Towers to nowhere in particular, as proposed by the Government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. gentleman said nothing about "nowhere in particular"—that objection applies to all lines—and the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) said it would be madness to carry the line beyond Charters Towers. I have long known that hon. member's opinion regarding that line. It would not have been proposed in this House had it not been for political purposes. It was proposed with others to enable him to hold his seat for Maryborough. And talking of political dishonesty, I recollect four years ago when that hon. member, sitting upon these cross benches, held himself up for sale to either side of the House which would give him a railway from Maryborough, and he has since by his speeches in this House justified his action on that occasion. When you, Mr. Speaker, brought in the Continental Railway Bill the hon. gentleman was then in the same position that he occupied to-night. He was then dangling himself with his well-known Parliamentary skill and ability before this or that side of the House to see which would take him. Here is what he said on that occasion about the Bill, railways, and log-rolling. I will take the liberty of inflicting it upon the House, and in connection with the hon. gentleman's proposition to-night, that we should begin

afresh and have a new party in which all old blood would be eliminated, I could not help thinking when the Colonial Secretary interjected, "and burn *Hansard*," that no one would gain more than the hon. member for Maryborough by the burning of *Hansard* and the forgetting of past times. The hon. member said—

"When a railway was under consideration there was a great deal to justify log-rolling with all its objections."

According to that doctrine log-rolling is justifiable, and Ministers would be compelled to do what they did not believe in in order to keep their position. The hon. member went on to say—

"The different districts of the colony were all interested in the expenditure of public money; it was their life-blood. If public money raised by loan was spent in one district, that district was handicapped; capital was invited to that district, and enterprise and industry advanced. That expenditure in one district subtracted from other districts. Railways had hitherto been entered upon as speculations; the calculation of what they would pay in the future was advanced in favour of their construction. The interests of other districts must be considered in the same way as the interests of the Southern district and of the Rockhampton district were considered when the existing railways were entered upon. His district was now as important as was Rockhampton when the Great Northern Railway was started. He did not impugn the policy of the Government; but he said it contained no justification for the railway westward as a speculation that should not be applied alike to all districts of the colony. In New South Wales three lines were carried on simultaneously. Many persons thought that one might have been more advantageously carried out to completion; and perhaps it would have been, for Sydney and Melbourne. But the Western and the Northern districts came forward with their claims, and they had their railways as well as the Southern districts. A great deal could be said in favour of such a policy, whatever the exceptions that might be urged against it. He took this opportunity to express a hope that, as the Government had committed themselves to the policy of the Western Railway, a similar policy would be applied to districts that were to be similarly affected. If he was supported by honourable members who represented those districts, he should feel it his duty, most certainly, when the Loan Bill came under consideration, to oppose grants of money for one district unless something like an equivalent provision was made for the others."

This is log-rolling to all intents and purposes, and it is justified by the subsequent action of the hon. gentleman, who proceeded—

"He did not presume, as a supporter of the Ministry, to interfere with their policy; but his feeling was, that it would have been wiser for them to have taken mature counsel as to what was required in a railway policy as applied to the districts of the colony generally. He should

not be afraid of a larger loan, but he should couple it with the condition that it should spread over a number of years."

Is he afraid now to spread a loan over a number of years?—and the loan which he was then not afraid to enlarge was £1,700,000.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I am not afraid of a big loan now under proper conditions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With regard to what has been said of New Zealand, and to one district requiring an expenditure of money when it saw that another got it, I will read an extract from the public works statement made last year by the Hon. James Macandrew, the New Zealand Minister for Public Works. He said—

"Assuming these proposals to be approved by the Legislature, it becomes an important question—what is to be our procedure with regard to the works not already sanctioned? The House will, of course, recognise the impossibility of coming to any conclusion on such a matter which can be satisfactory to all. Each district in the colony believes that its claim to be provided with railways at the cost of the State ranks at least as high as the claim of any other district; and none, probably, will admit that any such claim ought to be met before its own. This, in truth, is a great difficulty which the House, by its past legislation, has brought upon itself. That difficulty commenced from the moment when the Legislature repealed that cardinal condition of the public works policy that, in the event of the proceeds of any railway failing to meet interest and sinking fund on the cost of its construction, property in the district should be rated to make up the deficiency. The difficulty is one which I confess I cannot solve."

That is the very proposition that I made to the hon. member in 1876, and which he rejected with scorn. I am gratified to find that in another colony the very proposition which I made was law, unknown to me, and I think the hon. member for Maryborough can have no pleasure in knowing that he and his party, but he particularly, are responsible for the rejection of the amendment that I proposed in 1876. Before I go on to justify the proposals of the Government, I shall say a word or two about the Divisional Boards Bill, and the opposition it has met here up to the present. Every member who speaks in this House expresses himself strongly in favour of local government, and at the same time, also, every member who speaks from the Opposition benches indicates his determination not to permit the Bill to become law. I can scarcely understand the position which hon. members take up when they say that they are in favour of it and yet they are opposed to it. Hon. members must admit that local government prevails in all countries possessing similar, or nearly similar,

forms of government to ours—with the exception, I believe, of New South Wales, and possibly Tasmania. I believe these are the only exceptions in which local government does not exist: it exists in Great Britain, the local revenue there being nearly two-thirds of the Imperial revenue, and it is disbursed by local authorities. It is the same in France, in Belgium, and in every other country in Europe. It also prevails in a similar way in America, where they have parish government, county government, state government, up to the federal government; each authority is independent of the other, and in the county and township governments the roads and bridges and other local public works are provided by taxation upon the district. It is only in this colony and New South Wales that we have a different system to the rest of the civilised world, and it comes to us from very unfortunate circumstances indeed. It is very like what the hon. member for Maryborough described the other day when speaking of the old Courthouse in Queen street—a relic or remnant of the barbarous old times. It comes down to us from the time when men were compelled to work upon the roads of New South Wales; and so little difference is there between the system that was then established and the system that now exists that even the very nomenclature has been retained—road parties, gangers and overseers—there they are, the very same as in the old times. And further north the difference is even less than in the southern portion of the colony. In the south the supplying of rations has been abolished, but in the northern districts road parties receive a certain amount of pay and rations; while in the older times similar road-parties existed, but they were bondmen instead of freemen, and they received no pay but rations. Why should such a system—a relic of the barbarous old times—be allowed to exist in this colony amongst free men? Those hon. gentlemen who are continually professing liberal opinions ought, I think, to be the last to keep up a system of that kind. I think we should revert to the system which prevails in every other country which boasts of the same form of Government; and I ask, who is it who should pay for the making of roads and bridges? The people whose properties are improved by the expenditure upon their roads and bridges—but, at present, it is a tax upon the general revenue, and, consequently, working men who are not owners of property are compelled to pay for the improvement of the properties of individuals with whom they have no connection in the districts in which they live. I believe every hon. member opposite fully endorses my opinion in his heart—or in his “heart of hearts,” as the late Treasurer repeatedly

said last night—but they are afraid of offending the prejudices of their constituents. That is the real objection to the Divisional Boards Bill; and I may say further that I have positive information that a great deal of the agitation got up against the Divisional Boards Bill is actually worked up by these very road-parties themselves. I have been written to on the subject and told the same thing by individuals from different parts of the country, who say that the chief agitators who work up the farmers are the members of road parties, assisted by certain members who sit on that side of the House. I now come to the question of railways. A great deal has been said by hon. members opposite about these railways going nowhere. Well, I have repeatedly heard in this House, America set down as an example for railway making, and do those members not know that a great many American railways not only go nowhere but actually go in advance of settlement, and are the only roads in the whole district? Yet we are accused of taking railways nowhere, when we are taking them into country not only settled, but that has been settled for years; but, because we have no large towns as the termini at the western ends, we are told we are taking them nowhere. We were asked by the hon. member for Maryborough, and also the hon. member for North Brisbane—and I believe that is the chief objection to making these lines at present—to show how these railways could be made to pay without imposing additional taxation upon the people. Of course, we know that our scheme is exactly the same as those hon. gentlemen themselves adopted last session. We were told distinctly by one of them that the scheme was the same in figures, and the other said if he knew it was not so absurd he would almost say we had access to the documents belonging to the Cabinet. Therefore, our scheme must have come very near in its size and number of lines to the scheme which those hon. gentlemen themselves adopted at the end of last session. I am quite prepared to prove that we shall not require any additional taxation for the extension of these lines westward. I do not know that I can say as much for the branch lines, but I am certain that the extension of the lines westward will not impose one single penny of additional taxation upon the working men of this colony. In speaking of the branch lines, the question arises—which was mentioned by the hon. member for Maryborough—of the value of the land to be resumed for the construction of those lines. That is certainly a very important part of the question; but I believe that in a great many instances, if not in all, the people through whose land the lines will be made will give it to the Government,

for the construction of these railways, for nothing. I know that the hon. member for Enoggera, and other gentlemen, are now negotiating with the owners of property upon the Sandgate line, and I myself have received offers from the owners of property on the line to Mount Esk and the Fassifern line, and also on a line which is not down upon this list—the line to the Upper Logan—stating they will give the land for nothing for the construction of those lines. I think that takes a good deal of the sting out of what the hon. member for Maryborough said as to the cost of the land to be resumed for the construction of these lines, and I feel quite certain—although if we were to take the cost of the land upon the Brisbane extension as a criterion to go by we would certainly be frightened—that, taking the propositions which have been made publicly and privately, we have no cause to fear the cost of land to be resumed upon any of these branch lines. As to the payable nature of the lines when made, I have not so much faith in them as I have in the lines which will go westward; but I believe they will conduce to settlement, and that by increasing the population they will have the effect ultimately of paying for their own construction, more especially when they are made for £3,000 per mile and under. But the lines to go westward having no land to be resumed, and going through country where there is not the slightest doubt settlement will be increased to a very great extent, will certainly pay more than the interest upon the cost of construction. I think I have figures in my possession which will prove that.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Produce them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will produce them at my own time. I shall not produce them at the demand of the hon. member for North Brisbane; I shall do so when I please, and before I sit down to-night. We have been told by the hon. member for Maryborough that we should make provision for the payment of the interest upon these lands going westward. The hon. member mentioned a land-tax to-night; but I do not see how he could apply a land-tax to the pastoral lessees through or near whose runs these lines would go, because it would be impossible to impose a land-tax upon land which is not owned in fee-simple. Of course, we can impose a land-tax in settled districts, if this House would agree to it; but I don't see how you can impose such a tax upon men who have no right or title to the land beyond six months.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I referred to a revision of the leasehold tenure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am prepared to deal with what the hon. member has stated in regard to the revision of the

leasehold tenure. I did not say or imply that I was prepared to propose it. The hon. gentleman was in office for four years, and why did he not propose it? Well, the cost of the land from Ipswich to Toowoomba and the Dalby and Warwick extensions was ten thousand and some odd hundred pounds per mile, and the Brisbane was sixteen thousand and some hundred pounds per mile. The cost of construction of the Southern and Western Railway up to the 31st December last was £4,135 per mile; of the line from Rockhampton to Westwood, £9,581 per mile; and of the line from Westwood to the Comet, £5,923 per mile—making a total cost up to that date of £3,541,494, or an average cost of £9,078 per mile. Let us see now what were the net earnings of those lines. The working expenses of the Southern and Western Railway during that period amounted to £859,205, and the receipts to £1,251,129, leaving a balance of net earnings of £391,923. On the Central Railway the working expenses during the same period amounted to £154,060, and the gross receipts to £167,465, the net earnings being £13,404. The total net earnings of the two lines thus amounted to £405,327. The first section of the Southern and Western Railway was opened in 1865, and of the Central Railway in 1867, and during last year the net earnings of those two lines amounted to nearly one-fourth of the total amount earned during the whole of that period of fourteen years. We will now see what was the percentage of those net earnings towards the cost of construction. Last year the Southern and Western Railway paid £3 12s. 9d. towards the interest upon its cost of construction, and the Central Railway paid £3 0s. 9d. towards the interest upon its cost of construction—that cost being an average of £9,000 per mile. Taking the returns of last year, what would have been the amount payable towards interest if those lines had cost only £4,000 per mile? The Southern and Western line would have paid £9 3s. 2d. per cent., or £4 10s. more than we can borrow money at; and the Central line would have paid £5 6s. 9d. per cent. But if those lines had been made at a cost of £3,000 per mile, as we now propose to make them, the Southern and Western line would have paid £13 5s. 11d. per cent., and the Central line £7 2s. 3d. per cent. It has only been within the last four years that the Central Railway has paid, and the Southern and Western Railway was open three or four years before it paid anything, the working expenses being borne partly out of loan. Can anyone doubt that if we make railways at the cost we propose we shall not have far more returns than will suffice to pay the interest on the cost of construction? This return is conclusive enough. Every mile

of railway we make westward—and I am not prepared to say that the same will not happen to branch lines—will not only pay more than the interest upon its cost of construction, but will tend to reduce the interest we are paying on the more costly lines already built. I will now come to the question of revision of tenure. We are continually being told that these lines are to be run out westward solely for the benefit of the pastoral lessees. I confess I once held similar opinions, and I believe that people who hold those opinions hold them in ignorance of the real facts of the case. A majority, I believe, of those who are able to free themselves from antiquated prejudices, to which all were more or less subject, would, if they took the trouble to inquire into the real facts of the case, come to the same conclusion that I have come to myself. I challenge any man in the House to doubt the sincerity of my belief in the opinions I express here to-night. Neither the hon. member for North Brisbane nor the hon. member for Northern Downs has any right to say that we are not sincere in this Loan Estimate, or that I am not sincere in bringing down an Estimate of this kind as Minister for Works. The pastoral lessees, like every other class of men in the country, pay their share towards the general revenue of the colony. They pay as much in the shape of taxation as any other individuals, so do their employes, and the carriers, dam-makers, and workers on stations generally. In addition to this they pay, for the use of the country which they have the privilege of grazing upon, a certain amount per annum in what are called pastoral rents. Let us see what this pastoral rent has amounted to in Queensland since Separation took place, and also the amount of interest that has been paid upon the cost of railway construction during the same period, and we shall find that in addition to the general taxation imposed upon the pastoral lessees, the pastoral rents would have not only paid the whole of that interest, but would actually go £280,000 beyond it. The total receipts for pastoral rents up to the 31st December, 1878, were £2,165,397, and up to the same period the total amount paid by way of interest on railway construction was £1,885,000; leaving a balance in favour of pastoral rents, as I said before, of £280,000. Will any hon. member dare to stand up and say that the interest on the construction of these railways is borne by any individual taxpayers in the colony? I say it is the grass of the colony that pays the interest upon railway making. It is not paid from Customs, nor from land revenue;—the source from which it is paid is the natural grasses of the colony, which belong to the people of the colony. I say further, that by extending these lines westward we shall

not only double the receipts from the general charges upon railways, but we shall also be in a position, if need be—if the hon. members for North Brisbane thinks fit to do so when he recovers power—to obtain a much larger rent from the pastoral leases, on account of the increased benefit they derive from these railways. I will point out to the hon. members for Maryborough and North Brisbane how they can increase the revenue—namely, by giving security of tenure to the pastoral lessees. With security of tenure and increased railway accommodation they will be able to double the pastoral rents and double the number of miles of railway running into the interior.

MR. GRIFFITH: Why don't you propose it yourselves?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When we think fit to propose it; when we have made up our minds to do so; when we have given the western country the privilege of railway communication; and when we think we can bring in a measure to give security of tenure, we shall have the courage of our opinions, and that is what neither the hon. member, nor his colleague the hon. member for Maryborough, ever had when they sat on these benches. There is another point which the hon. member for North Brisbane was very oblivious about, last night. He asked what would be the good of carrying the railway 130 miles further westward. It would be so much nearer to the good country; any child could tell you that it would be 130 miles nearer, and it does not require the legal acumen of a lawyer to discover that. But we are all very well aware that it is simply the cost of the carriage both seaward and into the interior that prevents a good deal of land being taken up. I have not seen the land in the west, but I have every reason to believe it is good pastoral land. I know it is the cost of the carriage which prevents land being occupied as sheep country which is now occupied by cattle, and much is not occupied at all. If we carry a line westward, even 130 miles, it will have the effect of turning a good deal of the country at present occupied by cattle into sheep country. If we next take into account the number of sheep which at present exist in the country west of present extension, such as the country westward of Roma, and 130 miles westward of the terminus of the Central Railway, and of the Northern line reaching towards the Mitchell and the Gregory and in that country—if we take into account that there are only 3,000,000 sheep there, and as we know what the country is, and that it will feed sheep, it does not need any stretch of the imagination to believe that, with a natural increase of only a third, year by year in five years the 3,000,000 will become 12,000,000. Then

what will be the result if, instead of having 3,000,000 sheep—and there are not quite that number—in that country, we have 12,000,000 at the end of five years when we have carried these lines 130 miles to the west, and I hope even further? The increase of the carriage alone, independent of all the sources of revenue derived from carriage, would be 15,000 tons, and at present rates that would probably amount to £45,000 or £50,000. Take, in addition to that carriage, the supplies sent inward from the coast, and which may be taken at a moderate estimate at half the outward carriage to the coast, if we add these two together they will produce an amount more than sufficient to pay the interest on the cost of the construction of the western extensions. In addition to that, we must recollect that every pound weight of this wool and every pound weight of these supplies will not only be carried over this 130 miles of extension, but will also be carried over and will pay carriage on the portions of the lines already made from Roma, and on the other lines right down to the coast. When we see the prospect before us in constructing those western lines, it is annoying to find men of even ordinary intelligence using arguments against their construction. There was a time when the gentlemen who represent the party which now sit on the other side of the House sat here, and then we were accused of being the opponents of railway construction. But the times have changed. The men who then claimed to be the Liberals and the advocates of railways are now opposers and obstructionists. They see the same thing happening now which happened fourteen years ago;—they know what was said in those days of the Darling Downs by members who were opposed to settlement—they said that a cabbage would not grow on that land. These gentlemen opposite are the successors of those. They say, "You should not carry railways westward because you will not increase settlement; you are doing it only for the benefit of the pastoral lessees; you are imposing taxation on the working man." I deny *in toto* an assertion of that kind. The real friends of the working-man are those who propose to give employment to him, and these proposals mean employment and the extension of settlement. When railways were commenced to the Darling Downs, were not the Darling Downs in just the same position as the western country is in now? What has been the effect of the construction of railways to the Downs? Has not settlement been induced there, and have not the pastoral lessees receded before agricultural settlement? Have not towns sprung up in all directions? I appeal to the hon. member for Toowoomba to state what was the position of the Darling Downs before rail-

ways were constructed out there, and I ask him, with the knowledge of the district which he possesses, whether it was possible to have brought about settlement there unless the railway had been constructed? I say the making of railways here, as in other colonies, will be a great civiliser of the country, and it is no use for these gentlemen to stand up under the pretence of protecting the working man, because he will not suffer one single penny of additional taxation upon his beer, bread, or tobacco. As I have said before, every mile of railway we make towards the setting sun—as my hon. friend terms it—will not only pay for its own construction, but assist to pay for the progress made in railway construction already. The hon. member for North Brisbane, in introducing this motion last night, told us he is not instigated by a desire of turning out the Government upon this motion;—then, I ask, what has been his motive? Why has he introduced a motion of this kind, having no better plea to bring forward than the one which he brought forward last night—the accusation which has been repelled time after time this session—that we wanted to borrow money to leave it in the banks to earn interest? The interjection of my hon. friend the Minister for Lands, last night, was construed into an expression of approval of this course. But I have shown to-night that the manner in which the interest was to be earned was in the legitimate work of making railways, and which would produce a larger amount of interest than any bank would give. The amount of interest earned by railways made at £3,000 per mile is, as I have said, 3 or 4 per cent. more than any bank will pay. The Treasurer has frequently said that he has no intention of depositing money in banks, and the member for North Brisbane did what was unworthy of himself last night when he brought forward the accusation again after it has been repelled and denied repeatedly. A good deal might have been said by hon. gentlemen on the other side, if they had chosen to speak, about the general depression and falling-off in the railway receipts during the present year; but when it is remembered that a few years ago, when the price of cattle was so high in the western country that men who reared stock and had fat cattle could sell for from £5 to £8 per head in the western country—compare the price now paid even in Brisbane, after undergoing the expense and danger and loss of travelling, only from £4 to £4 10s. per head is received for the same class of cattle that three years ago fetched £2 or £3 more. That is quite sufficient to account for the depression existing, and for the falling-off in the railway receipts, because when men's incomes are reduced through the want of sale of that

which is produced, they cannot enter into improvements as they have been in the habit of doing, such as dam-making, well-sinking, fencing, and building of houses—things that have been done, and will, I hope, be done again when times improve. All this is sufficient to account for the falling off in the revenue, without stating that there will be a permanent depression in the receipts. The present depression is merely temporary. We are suffering from it in common with all the rest of the world; but in addition to that we are suffering from the over-production of fat stock and the effects of the drought, which killed so many hundreds of thousands of sheep. The only safety-valve we have at the present is to extend the railways westward, open up country to the occupation of the sheep farmer, and extend and support that occupation; and by so doing we shall increase the capabilities of paying the interest upon the great debt which we have already incurred—a much larger one, I admit, than should have been incurred for the work which there is to show for it. It cannot be denied that the great portion of the money that has been expended has been on unproductive works. With every penny that has been spent on railways—even upon the blundering railways that have been made, and which were projected by hon. gentlemen opposite and left unfinished; unproductive as these railways may prove to be for many years—I say it is better than expending money upon many items of expenditure that have been done in the colony. Some few weeks ago I had a conversation with a gentleman who is well skilled in railway matters, and he stated to me his belief that a company could be formed which should take the management of these railways entirely out of the hands of the Government, and pay the whole interest upon the cost of construction; and he believed that such a company—properly managed, as it would be, no doubt—away from the influence of politics, which interfere too much with railway management and construction—would be able to recoup itself, even at the present time, although the Government managing the railways cannot make them pay the interest. I thoroughly believe, not only that that would be the case, but that if the public creditor was compelled at the present moment to take possession of the railways and public estate and work them, they would make enough to pay the whole of the interest upon the public debt. That is a bold assertion, but I believe it would pay any company who could get the Government to hand over to them these railways to work, and also to take any extensions as they were made. I believe the money they would produce would pay the whole of the interest on the public debt. Holding that belief, which may perhaps be

thought an exaggerated one, I do not see how any man can rise up in this House as the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn) did last night, and accuse the Government of insincerity in bringing forward these Loan Estimates. I believe I have never said anything more sincerely than when I say this—that I believe that these Loan Estimates will not, if carried, impose one penny more additional taxation on the people. I believe that many hon. members opposite, who will vote against the Government on this question from party feeling, hold the same opinion that I do—that additional taxation will not be required, but that the railways will pay for the cost of construction and will pay a great deal more than is in this Loan Estimate. Before I sit down I must advert to a remark made by the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn) last night. I did not contradict the hon. member at the time, as I knew I should have an opportunity of doing so, although a day after. The hon. member said the survey of the line to Fassifern was different from that made by him when he was in office as Minister for Works, and that it had been altered to please men who had voted for the present Government. It is true the hon. member said that that was only a rumour, but he repeated it, and it has been recorded in *Hansard* as an assertion. I now, however, contradict it this night, and I say that the fresh survey which is being made is in order to give additional carriage to that railway, and that the engineer in charge is quite willing to accept the whole of the responsibility of the change now being made. I do not know any electors in the district, nor have they mentioned the matter to me, and therefore I say that it is not fair of the hon. member to make a statement which is not true; and I now give it my most unqualified contradiction, and trust the hon. member will not repeat it. I say that if we can make railways for £3,000 or even £4,000 a mile, additional taxation will not be required, and I think if the hon. member for Maryborough and the leader of the Opposition believe these figures, which have been carefully prepared by officers in the Works Department, they have no right to say that they will cut down the Loan Estimates, and stop the progress of them, through fear of additional taxation being imposed on the people by their being passed in their present form.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he had listened with great attention to the speeches which had been delivered by the leaders on both sides, and he had been unable to discover from those made by members of the Government who had addressed the House that they had in any respect satisfactorily answered the accusations so powerfully made by the leader of the Opposition.

The first accusation was that the Government had changed their policy entirely, and the arguments adduced by the hon. gentleman were amply sufficient to carry conviction to the minds of hon. members that what he said was perfectly true. Whatever might have been the vacillation of the late Government, he believed that those who had been accustomed to hear the denunciations hurled forth against them by the hon. members now on the Treasury benches would say that the present Government should be the last to show any signs of vacillation. The charge made against the Government was that when they first met the House they stated that a loan would be asked for the purpose of prosecuting public works with vigour. They did not go beyond that then, but there was a change when the Treasurer came down to make his Financial Statement. The hon. gentleman saw that that vague policy would not do, and in order to satisfy a clamour for branch lines he went so far as to say that he would make an experiment by constructing branch lines to some favoured lands on the Darling Downs. Then, finding that that was not acceptable to members on both sides, the hon. gentleman made a further concession and put nearly half-a-million on the Loan Estimates for branch lines. If these things did not indicate a change of policy on the part of a Government, which had always prided itself on its firmness, he did not know what did. There were hon. members on his side of the House who, whenever they put forward advanced ideas had been treated with scorn by hon. members on the Government side of the House and on the Government benches; and only a few weeks ago the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Mackay) was stigmatised in every conceivable way when he spoke about its being possible to construct good railways at a cost of £3,000 a mile; yet now they had that hon. member's statements quoted by the Government as an authority on cheap railways, and a proof afforded that, notwithstanding all the stolidity of the present Government, they found that a change of front was advantageous, and that, after all, they must accommodate themselves to the times. Another accusation made by the leader of the Opposition against the Government was, that the Government had come down with a proposal to borrow money without saying how that money was to be raised, or how it was to be expended when it was raised. And what plea did the Government put in to such an accusation? The first plea was that of compulsion. They said they were bound to borrow money, as they had been placed in such a position by the preceding Government that they must go on with railway construction. They said that there were four or five thousand adult population dependent on

Government employment for their subsistence; and, therefore, they must carry on, not only the public works now in existence, but others, in order that those four or five thousand persons should live. That wonderfully benevolent care for the people who were dependent on the Government for their daily bread perfectly astonished him, and he could only attribute it to the plastic character of the Government. This was the Government that not long ago dismissed a number of men from their employment, and the Premier of which said that he would put the knife of retrenchment in still deeper. Now, forsooth, when they wished to obtain the assent of the House to a loan to carry on public works with what they called vigour, their plea was that those poor men whom they dismissed only a few months ago wanted work, and that they must be supplied with the means of obtaining bread. When the Government talked in that strain did they even calculate that there must be a time when the borrowing powers of the colony would be exhausted, and that then other means must be found for supplying these working-men with bread? Such a plea was unworthy of a Government of such high pretensions. It would be far better if they were to come down with a proposition to borrow three millions of money, so that they might at once distribute it in the shape of coin among these men in whom they had suddenly taken such a paternal interest. Another plea put forth by the Government, was that of justification, and the hon. Minister for Works had dealt almost exclusively with that part of the subject, and had reiterated the arguments used by his colleagues, that the Government were only following the example of their predecessors. It was simply a repetition of the "You're another" argument, which was a very poor argument after all. For instance, a couple of urchins might dispute as to the manner in which they ought to dispose of a number of apples they had abstracted from a neighbouring orchard, and they might call each other liars, but it would matter very little whether or not those particular accusations were deserved, as the owner of the orchard from which the fruit was abstracted would come at once to the conclusion that they were both thieves. The Government were accused of playing fast and loose with the best interests of the country in their plan for borrowing money and employing money, and all they had to say was—"You did the same, and therefore we are justified." Was that an argument worthy of reasonable men? Did those hon. gentlemen take into consideration that there were twenty-seven new members in the House—that nearly half the entire number of the representatives of the people were new to the House? It was nothing to them what the last Government

did. The actions of the last Government did not indicate to them what line of policy they should pursue. The interests of the colony were dearer to them than a mere question of who should occupy the Treasury benches. It was no argument to him—and he spoke the sentiments of many other hon. members—to say that because the last Government did certain things the present Government were not to be condemned for doing likewise. In his first speech in the Assembly, he had stated that the action of the Thorn Government, in coming down to the House with a bunch of railways, was an action which he could not approve; and had he been a member of the House then, he should not have allowed any party considerations to prevent him from voting against them. Had the painful alternative been presented, he should not have scrupled to give his vote for turning out the Thorn Ministry, just as he should give his vote to-night to turn out, if possible, the Mellwraith Ministry. In replying to the hon. member for Enoggera, the Treasurer gave as a reason for asking for three millions of money all at once, that the capitalists in England were getting tired of everlastingly dealing out single millions of money. Those were not his exact words, but the substance was, that English capitalists were tired of advancing loans in dribbets. In support of his position he went on to say that the hon. member for Enoggera, when he held office, made application year by year. It was a wonder so acute a logician as the Treasurer did not see that his own words provided the most effectual answer to his argument. He said the public creditor got tired of advancing moderate sums, yet just before he had admitted that every time the English capitalists had been applied to they had always subscribed every penny asked for. Surely, until the English capitalist said he was tired of advancing a million and a million and a-half at a time, it was too soon for the Treasurer to jump to the conclusion that in order to meet his demands it was necessary to enlarge the requirements of the colony to £3,000,000. In what way did the Treasurer propose to meet the interest upon this outlay? He gave an answer to that question, and the Colonial Secretary gave a very characteristic answer. The latter gentleman said he did not like the matter of interest being talked about, and he gave his candid opinion that he was perfectly sick of hearing about it. No doubt he was, but people were generally sick of listening to unpalatable truths, and the more wholesome the truths were the more rebellious did the subject to whom they were addressed become. That was no argument against harping upon and dealing very critically with the subject. With many persons suffering from temporary disorders the very thought of castor-oil had a ten-

dency to make them sick, but that did not prove that castor-oil was not the very best specific to apply to the disorder of which the subject of so much nausea was the victim. The Colonial Secretary did not like to hear about interest, but that was all the more reason why he should be literally dosed with it; and, until the matter of interest was swallowed holus-bolus, the body politic would not recover from the very serious disorder to which it was subject at the present moment. The Treasurer went further—and the Minister for Works followed in the same strain—he proposed to deal with this matter by permitting the normal sales of land to meet the requirements. He (Mr. Rutledge) did not profess to be a very old and experienced politician, and perhaps his ideas of political economy and statecraft might be crude and immature, but it seemed to him to be a very bad policy indeed to alienate the public estate permanently, whether valuable or otherwise, to meet a liability which would be of annual recurrence. He was aware that the same principle was laid down in the Railway Reserves Act; but, if he remembered correctly, that Act was very broad, and did not merely confine alienation to providing for the interest on the cost of construction of lines. The spirit of the Act was the paying for the actual cost of the line by the alienation of the public estate, and the provision for payment of interest only was for emergencies. He would favour the conversion of public estate into railway material, or he would favour the principle promulgated by private capitalists of constructing lines in exchange for liberal land grants. That was the true principle; but to permanently alienate land in all parts of the country, without distinction, to pay interest on a three-million loan, was bad policy—because, though it might be very desirable to alienate land to pay interest upon the construction of a certain line, if a wholesale scheme were adopted, interest might have to be paid on railways which would be a dead loss to the country. On the principle of the Railway Reserves Act a place was selected in which to make a line. There would naturally be a choice as to route, and the Government would take care that the line should travel through country the alienation of which would return the cost of construction. That was a very different thing from a wholesale making of railways to the setting sun. The hon. member for North Brisbane was twitted with having made an observation about a railway to the moon; but making a railway to the moon would be an infinitely less insane proceeding than making a railway to the setting sun. The Minister for Works attempted to justify the incurring of this debt by the deliberate assertion that the further the lines went the

more the fares would increase. The Treasurer used the same argument, and said that lines already constructed paid  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., and there was every reason to believe that the lines yet to be constructed on the truly economical principle enunciated by the Minister for Works would result in vastly larger returns. But the hon. members who had committed themselves to those statements lost sight of the fact that the lines already constructed had been constructed through the settled parts of the colony where the traffic was, and were not to be compared with lines proposed to be carried out in places where there was no settlement and where there was likely to be no traffic for many years, if ever. How could it be proved that, because up to a certain distance a line paid  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., if projected further into the wilderness it would pay more than  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.? How did the Minister for Works reconcile his statement with the policy he adopted in administering the affairs of the railways? He said that the further the lines were projected into the interior the larger would be the percentage of returns. Was that the reason why, on the opening of the Southern and Western line to Dulacca and beyond, the inhabitants of Toowong, Indooroopilly, and Oxley, were obliged to pay an advance of 150 per cent. in their railway fares? The inhabitants of those suburbs would have reason to deplore the fact that those railways ever paid at all, if that fact were to seduce the Government into carrying them further into the interior. If it were to be argued that the further the railways were extended into the interior the more must be paid for the privilege of travelling by them, the people would be forced to wish the lines had never been constructed. The facts in this case were stronger than the arguments. The Minister for Works, in order to make the Southern and Western Railway pay a percentage, had increased the suburban fares 150 per cent., and that fact completely upset his statement that the further lines were projected into the interior the greater would be the returns from them. A great deal had been said about the manner in which this borrowed money was to be dealt with, and several versions had been given. He should be the last to suggest that the Minister for Works had perverted facts. He had a higher opinion of him than the hon. member had of the hon. member for Maryborough, and he was exceedingly sorry to hear him speak of that hon. member in the terms that he did, for the hon. member for Maryborough could claim credit for all the essential qualities which went to constitute the true gentleman. He was never guilty of a breach of propriety, and therefore to make the attack upon him with the acerbity which the Minister for

Works displayed not only grated upon his (Mr. Rutledge's) feelings, but had caused him not to think as favourably of the Minister for Works as he should have wished. The hon. gentleman had given them his version about the three-million loan, and he was surprised that the hon. gentleman should have out-Heroded Herod in the way that he had advocated the interests of the squatters. Surely the Colonial Secretary might have been allowed to speak upon behalf of the squatters. The sentiments that the Minister for Works had uttered would have been perfectly becoming from him, or from the hon. member for Gregory; but, coming from the Minister for Works, he (Mr. Rutledge) could scarcely understand it. He thought that, as the hon. gentleman was the Mercury of the Ministry, he was selected to express sentiments which gentlemen opposite, dependent upon pastoral pursuits, were not so capable of uttering themselves. What was to be done with this three-million loan? The Colonial Treasurer, the Colonial Secretary, and the Minister for Lands had each given them a version, and Opposition members could not be charged with insincerity when they formed their conclusions from the different theories propounded by the gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches. The Treasurer said, "We do not intend to get the whole of the money at once." The Colonial Secretary said, "We don't want to pay interest from the jump." The Minister for Lands gave the House another version, saying, inferentially, that the money was to be brought into the colony.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I never said any such thing.

MR. RUTLEDGE said that when the leader of the Opposition said the money would be lying idle in the colony the hon. gentleman did not contradict the statement, although he contradicted one which was connected with it;—the fair inference, therefore, was that he assented to what he did not contradict.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I made no such statement as the hon. member asserts. If he has any credit balance lying idle in the banks he would know the value of the statement.

MR. RUTLEDGE said there were some hon. members whose capital was represented by their bank balances, and there were others whose capital was a different but more precious commodity. Whether the hon. gentleman was a millionaire or not he did not care. His bank balance was reckoned at precious little with him (Mr. Rutledge), as he had found that the men who boasted about their bank balances were generally men who had very little else to boast about.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hear, hear.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that, so long as he could go on paying his way—as he was happy to say he was able to do—he should be contented; and among the many customers which the hon. gentleman might have he would never reckon him. The hon. gentleman's bank balance would not be augmented, he could promise him, by the proceeds of his business with him. The hon. gentleman had told them last night that this loan would be earning interest. How could it do so if it was not brought into the colony? Why should there be this talk about the Opposition twisting or construing statements? They must construe the statements they heard, and when such a statement was made as came from the Minister for Lands last night, they must put the natural interpretation upon it. Was it because the Minister for Lands had got himself into a scrape with his colleagues—was it because he had received a gentle reminder from them that he had been a little too free in the exposition of the Cabinet's views, that he was now so eager to retract his words of the previous evening? The natural interpretation to be placed upon his words was that the money would be earning interest in the colony, and he (Mr. Rutledge) would venture to say it would do so to a great extent by assisting to develop properties which in some cases represented very little freehold. He wished to say a few words upon the Loan Estimates in the light that the Premier threw upon them in his statement last week. He had no interest in the trunk lines, but he was concerned in the branch lines, and he very narrowly watched the mode in which the hon. gentleman dealt with them. In referring to the Sandgate line the hon. gentleman dealt with a line which a large number of his (Mr. Rutledge's) constituents were anxious to see constructed, and they were rather sanguine, after the interview that a deputation had with the Minister for Works, that it was among the things likely to be accomplished at an early date; but when the Treasurer dealt with the question he said—

“The Engineer's estimate is £6,000, but mine is £4,000; and if the line can be made for that sum the colony might be justified in making it, but it would not be justified at the extravagant estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief.”

What conclusion was he to form from that statement? To whom were they to look for accurate estimates of the cost of constructing railways if not to civil engineers—to men who had devoted their lives to the study and practice of their profession? Did the Colonial Treasurer mean to say that he was a more likely authority, and more to be depended upon, than the Engineer-in-Chief for Railways? Could there be a plainer way of indirectly saying, “I wish you joy of your Sandgate Railway,”

than was contained in the hon. gentleman's statement regarding it? He sheltered himself under so many conditions that he had a very easy way of beating a retreat if the loan was granted, and he was required to proceed with the first line as it stood on the list of branch railways. He (Mr. Rutledge) did not intend to analyse the character of the various branch railways, but he had only to look at another line to convince him that there was a transparent stamp of insincerity upon these estimates. There was so much in them that was but mere gloss and veneering over an elegantly constructed piece of workmanship to make it attractive. In justification of these observations, he had to draw attention to the Burrum line. Here they had a line of railway, which the Government had no more anticipation of being called upon to construct than he had, included in a list of branch lines in order to swell up the total and to make it appear that the Government were liberal in the construction of branch lines. Why should the Government undertake the construction of the Burrum line when it was known that it was intended to be built by private capitalists?—a principle the propriety and advisability of which he (Mr. Rutledge) had already advocated. He should conclude his observation with the general remark that he was not actuated by any feeling of personal hostility to hon. members on the Treasury benches. He was not going to draw invidious distinctions between them and other hon. members. Take them as a whole they were as good a set of men as could have been selected from that side of the House; neither was he actuated by an undue or precipitate desire to see the gentlemen from the Opposition benches transferred to the comfortable quarters opposite. The members of the Liberal party enjoyed a long tenure of office; and, although he was a consistent supporter of the party, he should tell them to their faces that they did not always improve the opportunity as they might have done; that they did not always use their advantages properly; and that perhaps a little sojourn in the cold shades of the Opposition benches would have a good effect upon them. It was no disadvantage to the country that they sat in Opposition; they would have time for reflection, and to resolve to do better in the future when the opportunity arose, as it would do. He was opposed to any Government that would come down to the House and say—“We intend making railways here, there, and everywhere;—give us three millions. We will make railways even to the setting sun, only let us have a grip of the money.” He would oppose any Government that would come down to the House with a policy like that. He did not wish to hold himself up as a model of patriotism or

self-abnegation, but he would say this—as he told an influential member of his constituency, who was very much interested in the Sandgate Railway—that he was prepared to resign his seat before he would give his vote for the construction of any line to please even the most influential of his constituents, when he believed that that vote would help to perpetuate a state of things in the colony which would tell with disastrous effect upon it through all its future history.

Mr. BEOR moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and negatived.

Mr. BEOR said the hon. member who had just sat down certainly possessed a very happy and trenchant and effective method of addressing the House; and if the arguments he used were as effective and as sound, he would be a most formidable member in debate. But when his arguments, which had every appearance of being effective and sound, came to be subjected to the slightest examination, they would be found not to be possessed of any great strength or depth;—in point of fact, they were arguments of that style which were calculated to attract for the moment, but which would not bear examination, and soon passed away from the minds of those to whom they were addressed. The hon. member had followed in a great degree the arguments which had been addressed to the House by other members on that side before him, and had commented on the fact that the direction in which the three main lines of railway enumerated in the Loan Estimates was not specified. That was a strong argument by hon. members opposite; it had been dwelt upon by the leader of the Opposition, the late Treasurer, and the hon. member for Maryborough; and it was to his mind exceedingly amusing to watch the way in which those hon. members attempted to wriggle out of the fact that the policy with regard to these railways which was now before the House was a continuation and necessary corollary of the policy submitted two or three years ago by the Ministry which then occupied the Treasury benches. And it was remarkable that throughout all those addresses there was such a vein that it was impossible not to come to the conclusion that every member who spoke in opposition to those Loan Estimates appeared to speak more in the style of people who came there prepared to attack—not from any sense of duty, not because those Estimates were really and truly open to attack or were not for the good of the country, but simply because they felt bound to attack. That characteristic was particularly remarkable in the speech of the hon. member for Wide Bay—in fact, he had never listened to a speech which was more full of sound than the speech of that

hon. member. What was the peroration which the hon. member treated the House to? That the policy of the Government as laid down in these three main lines of railway would make the western country a desert. He (Mr. Beor) did not suppose that a single candid member of the House would venture to make such an assertion as that, and such a statement showed the sincerity which ran through the hon. member's speech, which was just as great as the sincerity of the speeches of members on that (the Opposition) side of the House who spoke before him. As he had previously said, the speeches of hon. members opposite were marked by vain efforts to wriggle out of the position in which they were inevitably placed by the circumstances in which the country now stood—circumstances which obliged the present Ministry to incur vast responsibility and a large debt for the purpose of carrying into effect what had been commenced by the Opposition when in power—and their efforts would have been amusing if they had not been lamentable. What, for instance, was the position the late Treasurer took up? That no doubt these railways were good when they were projected by the late Government; he did not deny that they would pay, but he said this was not the time to make them. And why was not this the time to make them? The hon. member did not deny that in all probability the colony would, before long, recover from its present depression, but yet he said they should not undertake those works because it was a season of depression. If looking forward to the future there was no prospect of the colony ever recovering from its present position and being restored to the prosperity it enjoyed a short time ago, then the hon. member would have a right to say these works should not be undertaken, with no hope before them in the future; but he admitted that there was a prospect of even greater prosperity than they had ever enjoyed before, and yet he said this was not the time to make them. He had no doubt what was really present in the hon. member's mind was this objection—"You have to carry them out, and not we." He (Mr. Beor) maintained that the present was the proper time to undertake such works, in order to assist the country to tide over this season of depression and to provide work for men who were not able to obtain it at private hands. The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) accused the Premier of having said at one time that they should find work for the working-men of the colony, although at a previous time he thoroughly endorsed the action of his colleagues in dismissing men from the Public Service and throwing them, as the hon. member said, destitute upon the world. The hon. member was correct in stating

that the Premier endorsed that policy, but the men dismissed were men who were kept in the Service to do work that was not wanted in the colony at the time, and which they might never want; and the Government were now employing, or proposing to employ, men on the continuation of works which the colony had already sanctioned and declared to be good and beneficial, and which had been approved of by hon. members opposite themselves. The hon. member came forward and said he was a new member, and that there were twenty-six new members with him, and they were not going to take the declaration of either one side of the House or the other as to the proper policy for the Government to pursue; but he did not think the hon. member took up a position that was fair. They could only judge of the opinions of hon. members on that side of the House by the conduct of the leaders whom they supported. What, judged by that criterion, was their policy? It was simply one of opposition and obstruction to what that side when in office approved of, and which this side now proposed to continue. The hon. member for Wide Bay had shown that when the Railway Reserves Bill was brought forward some hon. members objected to the scheme of policy then introduced. He (Mr. Beor) fully agreed with those who opposed it, and believed it would have been far better for the country if it had never been launched upon that expensive system of railway making, but had pursued the even tenour of its way in simply continuing the lines that had been already commenced. He disapproved at the time of the line from Townsville to Charters Towers, still more that from Maryborough to Gympie, and most of all that from Bundaberg to Mount Perry. But the present Government had received those railways from its predecessors, and were bound to make the best of them and finish them. The works had proceeded so far that it would be more disastrous to the country to stop them than to continue them; although, as he had said before, it would have been far better if they had never been commenced. Another result of the rash scheme of railway making forced upon the country by the late Government was the present demand for branch railways. But for that the country would not have been called upon to make branch railways to the extent now demanded. Such lines must be made now, but it would have been far better if that policy had never been entered upon which had made them necessary. Seeing that branch railways were to be made, he was sorry the Government had not put one down for the district he represented. Many hon. members pretended to laugh at the claims of that constituency, but that was because they knew nothing about it. If a railway were made from Bowen to about seventy miles on the

Bowen River, it would be far more likely to pay than most of those which had been mentioned. There was agricultural land there as good as any on the Darling Downs, to say nothing of first-rate coal, and the Government which undertook such a railway would benefit, not the district merely, but the whole colony; for the line itself would become at once highly remunerative. It had been said by hon. members on the other side that there was no policy at all, because the Government had not specified the particular point towards which the railways were to run. But the policy of the Government had nothing to do with the termini of the several railways; their policy was to open the way to the vast tracts of splendid land in the region of the "setting sun"—land as good as any in the world for almost any purpose to which it could be put—land which would not only pay for the means of making it accessible, but which would contribute enormously when opened up to the general prosperity of the colony. An hon. member had laughed at the expression, a railway to the setting sun, as if it had been an equivalent for a railway to the moon. But this was not the first time that expression had been used. Centuries ago, in a Parliament far more illustrious than this, the expression was used for new homes far away where wealth and comfort could be realised, and where they were realised, and where, he believed they would be realised in this colony. The Government had also been accused of undertaking the line from Maryborough to the Burrum, although the Premier had shown the House quite clearly why that line should have been put upon the Estimates, notwithstanding that certain private speculators had wished to construct it. It was necessary to put it down, because that private scheme was not perfected and might never come to anything; whereas the making of the railway was almost a necessity for the developing of our coal resources in that part of the colony. He did not think the line from Brisbane to deep-water was at all to be compared with it in importance, and it could not only be made cheaper, but the coal was of a first-class character, and the line would be only about seventeen miles in length—thus affording every prospect that the line would be a paying concern. The hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) had looked upon it as strange that the Minister for Works should advocate the cause of the squatters, and intimated that it would have seemed far more natural if that duty had been undertaken by the Colonial Secretary or the Premier. Did he mean that he was surprised to find anyone else prepared to do justice to squatters besides squatters themselves? Members on the other side certainly gave some grounds for that surprise; and if the hon. member and his friends were astonished that the Minister

for Works, not being a squatter himself, should advocate the squatters' cause justly, he would leave the House to find the corollary to such a proposition. With regard to what had been said by the Minister for Works as to the hon. member for Maryborough, he (Mr. Beor) did not approve of those attacks by one side upon the other; but the hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) must allow him to remind him that it was not the Minister for Works who commenced that style of attack. It was not begun by his side of the House. These personal attacks had better be put aside altogether, for they did not do much honour or credit to the other side, while in this particular instance the Minister for Works was not at fault. The late Treasurer had used a strange argument in regard to the placing of loans when he said it would be better to go from time to time to the money market and not let our creditors know exactly what we were going to borrow, and he instanced one case in which he had kept the intentions of the Government quiet, in order that the lenders at home might be tempted to lend on advantageous terms, because if they found we were going to place another loan shortly afterwards they might not have been prepared to lend on such advantageous terms. That was a course of conduct and policy which he (Mr. Beor) would be very sorry to see carried out by the present Government. The hon. member said that it would be better, instead of expressing the solicitude which the Premier had for the lenders about to lend, to show a little more for ourselves as the unfortunate debtors. But the Premier could not show more consideration for the debtors than by showing, also, consideration for the creditors in determining to go into the money market only on honest, straightforward terms. Because if the Government fell into a deceitful policy of borrowing money it would recoil on their own heads very shortly, and, the lenders seeing the system, it would be difficult to get the money at all. But if the Government went into the market and borrowed openly and straightforwardly, then the lenders knew exactly our position, and what we intended to do—that the colony wished to borrow £3,000,000 to be extended over the next three years. That was the proper course to take, for, although under the other system they might get a better price once or twice, yet, if the system became habitual, it would militate against the colony's credit and we could not borrow on any terms whatever. The hon. member had also referred to the Divisional Boards Bill, and said Government were not going to pass that Bill because they had not got the sanction of the country for it, and there were so many petitions presented against it and not one in favour of it. That would not prevent the Bill passing; it was not an evidence the country

was against the Bill. The fact was, these petitions were the result of agitations which had been fomented by hon. members on the other side.

HON. MEMBERS of the Opposition: No, no.

MR. BEOR said it was not the true and honest outcome of the opinion of the country at all, but simply the result of agitation induced by constant meetings which were got up by hon. members opposite. Those hon. members had not the candour to treat the Government now in power with the same generosity and straightforwardness the Government had displayed when in Opposition. The late Government brought in their Local Government Bill and expressed a desire for local Government to be adopted all over the colony, not only in the municipalities and towns. The then Opposition acquiesced, but they did not approve of the Bill because it was not suitable to the purpose the Government professed it was meant for; but since then the present Government came into office, and had embodied the real principle of Local Government in a Bill which they believed, and which the other side had not ventured to deny, was in a form calculated to produce the effect the other side of the House had said it was their desire to procure. He would not say that members of the other side had personally, but tools and instruments had, by every kind of misrepresentation, tried to lead the country to believe that the Bill was not calculated to benefit the country, although the late Government declared such a Bill was necessary, and had expressed a desire to bring about such results as would be here obtained, but which could be brought about in no other manner.

MR. MOREHEAD moved the adjournment of the House.

THE PREMIER said that motion would have to go, in order to allow that for the adjournment of the debate to be moved, which was the wish of the leader of the Opposition as well as his own wish it should be. There was no chance of coming to a decision at present. If the hon. member (Mr. Morehead) understood that this motion was to be negatived, it could be allowed to go. The motion for the adjournment of the debate could then be put and carried.

Question put negatived.

MR. AMHURST moved the adjournment of the debate.

MR. GRIFFITH was quite aware that this was not the time to settle when the debate should be adjourned to, but he took the opportunity of asking now, as he wished to say something further on the motion for the resumption of the debate. The proper practice, which was usually followed, was to carry on a debate of this

sort until it was disposed of, and there was no reason why that practice should not be carried out here. He understood that the head of the Government wished not to come to a conclusion to-morrow. If not concluded to-morrow, it could be adjourned till Tuesday, as it was not advisable to take a division in a thin House. He could not see any inconvenience would follow from proceeding to-morrow; and, although he could not answer for all private members, he could for those of his side, being willing to give up the private day, and both sides of the House on an occasion of this kind would probably allow the question before them to take precedence. He conceived that the proper course would be to adjourn the debate until to-morrow; and if not then finished, to further adjourn it until next Monday or Tuesday.

Mr. MOREHEAD, as a point of order, asked whether the hon. member could interfere with the Sessional Order?

The SPEAKER said that the Sessional Order was that Government business should take precedence on Tuesdays and Wednesdays of each week, but there was nothing to say that Government business should not be proceeded with on other days.

The PREMIER said that when the leader of the Opposition talked about it being the practice to continue a want of confidence debate from day to day—taking precedence of all other business—he forgot that, since he had given notice of the motion, the House had met on Monday, on which day a great deal of business had been done. There was no reason whatever why they should depart from their usual custom to proceed with private business on Thursday. The first he had heard of the want of confidence motion was on last Thursday, at half-past ten o'clock in the evening. A number of his supporters were out of town, and it was not at all probable that the Government would consent to come to a division until they had their force together.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that it would be far more satisfactory if the leaders on both sides of the House would arrange when the debate should be resumed. It could not possibly be concluded to-morrow, as several hon. members had gone out of town with that understanding. The leader of the Opposition was too old a politician to think that he could steal a march. As to going on with the debate to-morrow, he (Mr. Palmer) was determined that it should not be done.

After some further discussion,

The question was put and passed; and it was resolved that the resumption of the debate should be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at twenty-six minutes past 10 o'clock.