

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 19 AUGUST 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 19 August, 1879.

New Member.—Questions.—Life Insurance Bill—third reading.—No-Confidence Motion—resumption of debate.

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

NEW MEMBER.

Mr. John Malbon Thompson took the prescribed oath, signed the roll, and took his seat as member for Ipswich.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. MILES asked the Minister for Works—

Has the Government come to any settlement with Mr. Ballard as to the amount of reward he is entitled to on the saving in construction of the Railway from Westwood to the Comet?—If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) replied—

1. No.

2. Because the Government are waiting for certain information which Mr. Ballard has been requested to supply.

Mr. MILES asked the Minister for Works—

What amount, if any, is available from votes passed by this House for the purpose of Railway Surveys?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

There is at present the sum of £5,246 4s. 3d. to credit of Loan Vote for Railway Surveys, which sum, it is anticipated, will be absorbed in completing the surveys already authorised,

LIFE INSURANCE BILL—THIRD
READING.

On the motion of Mr. RUTLEDGE, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. AMHURST said that, in discussing the motion proposed by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith), it would materially assist hon. members if they considered what kind of a vote it was. Was it a vote of no confidence with regard to the loan policy of the Government?—or was it a vote of no confidence on their general policy? It might possibly have been moved by the hon. the leader of the Opposition for some other reason. It was not necessary just now to describe what that reason was; but it might have been for his own convenience to enable him to find out what was the intention of his own followers. The speeches delivered by members on the Opposition side of the House showed that they were not at all united amongst themselves. The speech of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith) was a very half-hearted affair; and it was to be noticed from the first that the hon. gentleman did not enter into it in the spirit which he generally exhibited on important matters of that kind. It looked very like as if the hon. gentleman throughout was simply trying to make the best of a bad case. What were his charges against the Government? The most important charge he brought against them was that the Colonial Treasurer had not stated how the interest was to be provided, nor had laid plans and specifications of his proposed railways on the table. Another charge was that he was entering into too large a loan. The second charge was fully answered by the Premier, who explained that his loan took the shape it did in order to show the British public, who lent the money, what the colony would require during the next three or five years; and in taking that course the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government proved that his was not a short-sighted policy, but one that saw far ahead and was calculated to give confidence to the money lenders in England, who upon becoming acquainted with it would be at once led to say, "This is not a make-shift policy like that of the late Government, but the policy of a statesman." As to the plans and specifications, it was, of course, perfectly impossible to tell where lines that were to be built during the next three years would exactly go, or where the deviations would be, although the general direction was well known. It was enough

to know that the Government had a definite object—namely, to open up the western country, advancing the pastoral interests, and, at the same time, by means of short branch lines, developing the agricultural interests. This might not be a policy that would suit the Opposition, but it would certainly satisfy the British capitalists to whom the colony could alone look to advance the money required. With respect to the interest, as the Colonial Treasurer pointed out, the money was not to be borrowed at once, nor in one large sum, and it was to extend over a series of years. It was not likely, he might say, in connection with this part of his subject, that we were always going to remain in a state of depression. Queensland was sharing in the crisis through which the whole of the world had passed; it had affected, not Australia alone, but America. He passed through America two years ago, and a gentleman who was thoroughly acquainted with it said he had never seen America so depressed, and that some of the railways were not paying their working expenses, while only three-tenths of them were paying a fair dividend. Two months ago the same gentleman told him that the alteration for the better was something wonderful; and anyone reading the papers which came out by the last mail would see that a change in the direction of a revival was already beginning in England;—that shares and stock generally were rising, and that people were getting tired of merely having gold in the Bank of England, bearing no interest. There was, therefore, every reason to suppose that a time of prosperity would shortly be experienced by the Australian colonies. The change might be a few months distant, but it ought not to be longer. He was inclined to believe that a hopeful view would be the most sensible just now. It was but natural that a colony the size of Queensland would suffer when others suffered; and, in a corresponding degree, when a flow of wealth was enjoyed by other nations, there would be quite sufficient to put the colony in a state of prosperity. The Opposition seemed to be dead against the Divisional Boards Bill, which was one of the best Bills ever brought into the House, and the keystone of the whole Government policy. It would prevent wasteful expenditure on public works, and when the principle of pound for pound was established there would be equal justice for every portion of the colony. If any public work was to be done, it was only fair that people who got a direct benefit from it should pay a fair proportion of the outlay, and such a system was the best guarantee that could be devised against wasteful expenditure. The speech of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Douglas)

showed most conclusively of all that there was a split in the opposite camp. The hon. gentleman said he was a free lance—a free agent—and that he wanted a coalition ministry. The fact was the hon. gentleman wanted a new toy. The last Government, of which he was a member, was once truly described by the hon. member for Mitchell as kaleidoscopic. During the five years the party represented by that Government were in power they had three Premiers, five Ministers for Lands, two Colonial Treasurers, three Attorneys-General, five Ministers for Works, two Postmasters-General, and three Colonial Secretaries; and, if the hon. gentleman obtained his wish and had a coalition Ministry it would be one of the same kind. The hon. gentleman evidently was fond of change, for he himself took several positions—first of all sitting on the cross-benches, then becoming Minister for Lands, then Premier and Colonial Secretary. At one time the hon. gentleman voted against his party, and in his speech the other day he seemed at first to be a friend of the present Government, but by-and-bye he did not know what he was; and he (Mr. Amhurst) was sure no one else could gather what he was from the hon. gentleman's remarks. That the Opposition must be thoroughly disorganised was shown further by the member for Northern Downs, who was once Premier and Minister for Works, and who inaugurated a very vigorous policy, which he last week acknowledged to have been entirely wrong. It was gratifying to see that hon. gentleman turn from the error of his ways; but it would have been better if he had taken the advice of the Opposition when he was in office, and not plunged the country into the expenses caused by that policy. Many of the ways in which the public money was spent while the hon. gentleman was Minister for Works were enough to shake the credit of any colony; and the House would, no doubt, remember that memorable night when he got up and said, "Here; I'll give every district £2,000; settle it amongst yourselves." Was there ever a colony, however rich its resources, that could carry on successfully with a financial policy of that kind? At the present time, instead of a disorganised Government, they had a Government that was strong and firm—that had its own opinions, and that could carry them out. He (Mr. Amhurst) approved of the railway policy of the Government, and believed most people would approve of it too; for the railway policy aimed at developing pastoral and agricultural pursuits, while the loan policy provided for mining and other industries. No doubt, there were immense tracts of country in the far west that were now devoted to the rearing of cattle, and that would—if railways were pushed out

with a proper scheme—produce sheep, and be able to export large quantities of wool, which was one of the greatest sources of our wealth. The Government proposed, also, to encourage settlement by creating new agricultural districts. Any railway shorter than fifteen miles, however, would not pay, because it would pay better for farmers to bring their own produce that distance. After that it would begin to pay, and a line fifty or sixty miles long would not only enable people on the direct route to bring their produce direct to market, but also those living fifteen miles on each side of it, if not further. One of the most expensive things in agricultural pursuits was the bringing of produce to market and handling it. With a railway the produce would only have to be handled once before it got to the place of shipment, instead of a number of times as at present. The Government thoroughly understood the railway question, and the country might repose with confidence upon their judgment. Then came the vote for harbours and rivers. This, though not directly remunerative, was a most important thing for the welfare of the country. The improvements might be made for one particular district—say the port of Brisbane—but they benefited the whole colony by enabling vessels to come to and fro with those imports and exports on which the prosperity of the colony depended. The only thing he could possibly find fault with in the Loan Estimates was that a larger sum was not put down for roads to goldfields and other mines; and, although the making of railways thither might be a risky undertaking, owing to the uncertainty of some of the reefs, still he would have liked to see a larger sum put down to improve communications between the gold mines and the ports of shipment. He could not agree with the remark of the leader of the Opposition, that the £100,000 for loans to shire councils was a sop. It was nothing of the sort: it was an important part of the Government policy to give those bodies a fair start—in the same way as a house-owner would put a house in repair before giving the tenant his lease, and would then say, "Here is your lease, and you will have to keep the house in repair in future." All he hoped was, that in spending this money the Government would give it to those districts most fairly entitled to it, and not to those that had the most population—but those that had been entirely neglected by the late Government, which was only a Queen-street Ministry. Without occupying the time of the House further, he would conclude by saying that he did not believe the remark of the leader of the Opposition, that if the Ministerial side were free to vote according to their own convictions, and were not afraid of turning the Government out, they would

vote against the Loan Estimates. It was certain that on the division his side would give the Government a hearty support, because they had the courage of their opinions, and that the vote of the other side would be given for quite different reasons, and not one of them had said what the true reasons were.

Mr. MILES: It is not my intention to refer to speeches made in past sessions of Parliaments, for the quotations adduced by the hon. member for Wide Bay show clearly and distinctly to my mind that, whatever opinions the Ministers held in bygone days, they have abandoned them now. There can be no doubt about that. In advocating their public works policy, the Ministry say that the policy of the late Government was similar; but I hardly see any force in turning out one Government merely to put in another to do exactly the same things. The Premier took considerable exception to a speech made by the leader of the Opposition at Rockhampton, stating that the views he there put forward were similar to his own; but in saying so he left out the most essential part—namely, that the leader of the Opposition did not intend to meet the interest on the cost of construction of the main trunk lines out of general revenue. That is the great distinction between the railway policy of the two hon. gentlemen. The Premier's policy—and I object to it entirely—is that the residents in the settled portions of the colony, who have already borne the interest for the construction of those lines into the interior, are still to be oppressed by being called upon to pay for lines into that splendid country we have heard so much about. Considerable allowance might be made to the hon. member (Mr. Griffith) for his speech on that occasion, because he had just accepted the portfolio of Minister for Works—an office quite new to him—and above all it was an after-dinner speech—just like that of the Premier's at Ipswich when he praised up the Germans and said they were the best class of settlers we could get. I have nothing to say against the Germans; all they require is to be let alone to mind their own affairs; but, as I am not in the habit of flattering anybody, I will not say they are better than other people. I do not care where you carry railways to so long as you make those to be benefited by them pay the interest for their construction. If the Government will adopt that principle, I will offer no objection to the construction of these main trunk lines. Exception was taken by the leader of the Opposition that there is something indefinite in the railway policy of the Government—that we do not know whither they are going to carry the lines. We are simply told that each is to be extended 130 miles west, somewhere. Since that time we

have got a little more information. The Colonial Secretary interjected across the table, the other night, that these railways were going to the "setting sun." I have devoted some little time to the solution of the problem as to the locality thus designated, and I think I have succeeded in finding where the "setting sun" is. There is an article in the *Ipswich Observer* of yesterday, headed, "Does it solve the mystery?" in which the writer says—

"Under the head 'Notes from Australia,' the *Galloway Advertiser and Wigtonshire Free Press* publishes a lengthy article upon colonial affairs, from its 'intelligent correspondent, Mr. James McDowall,' and from which we (*Stannum Miner*) extract the following item as appropriate at the present juncture of political affairs, unless the combination of names italicised (the italics are our own) is a mere coincidence, unconnected with the 'men we know.' The writer says:—'All that we want in this great new country is more people of the right sort and more money. We are only a handful compared to what we can contain. You have got more people in one town than we have in the whole colony. Your readers may ask what inducements do we give to bring people from the old country. I answer—Cheap food, cheap land, and plenty of it; with employment and tolerably good wages for all who are able and willing to work. In order to show you the quantity of land that has lately been taken up, I enclose a slip cut from a newspaper, hoping you will find room for it in your valuable columns.' The subjoined is a portion of the slip enclosed, apparently from a South Australian journal:—'On the eastern boundary of the colony adjoining Queensland, and between the 24th and 18th degrees of latitude extending west towards the telegraph line, a large amount of country has been taken up for pastoral purposes within the past six months, the pioneers of the present movement being Messrs. Forrest, Collins, McIlwraith, and others, who have secured blocks of several thousand square miles, are vigorously searching for water, and are taking stock over from Queensland."

Here I may ask whether the £30,000 on the Loan Estimates, for water storage on main roads, has anything to do with the watering of the country here described? The article proceeds—

"These holdings are principally within the 136th to the 138th degrees of longitude, but the intervening country towards Tenant Creek and Alice Springs is also being rapidly taken up. The conditions of holding are that the lease shall be for a period not exceeding 25 years, at a rental of sixpence per square mile for the first seven years and ten shillings per square mile for the remainder of the term. The run must be declared stocked within three years, with at least two head of great cattle, or ten head of small cattle for every square mile. Numerous applications have been received and continue to be received for selections, and it is believed that large quantities of stock are being sent to the newly-claimed country in the dis-

tricts of the Herbert and James Rivers, having been driven out of the neighbouring colonies from want of water. Queensland and New South Wales squatters are taking advantage of the liberal terms of settlement, and on Wednesday, October 17, Messrs. *McIlwraith, Tully*, and *Drury*, of Queensland, took up 8,500 square miles. On the 8th Mr. *McIlwraith* also took up 2,400 miles, and on the 19th 2,000 miles were taken up by Messrs. Brown and Kilgour, of New South Wales, more to the southward, or just within the tropic of Capricorn between E. longitude 136 and 138. On the 10th Mr. De Burgh Persse, of Sydney, took up 6,000 square miles in a more central direction west of the other selections."

As to whether "Mr. De Burgh Persse, of Sydney," is identical with the hon. member for Fassifern, I cannot say; but I think I have found out—although, of course, I may be mistaken—where the "setting sun" is towards which our trunk lines are to run. I have not the slightest objection to the railways going in that direction if the Government will provide that those who are to have the benefit of them shall pay the interest on their cost of construction. At present a vast portion of that country returns to the revenue something less than one-sixteenth of a penny per acre, or 3s. per square mile; and yet in the face of that we are asked to make railways at the cost of the whole colony for the sole benefit of people who virtually hold the country for nothing. If the Government had only come down with a proposition to increase the rents of the pastoral lessees sufficient to pay the interest on the construction of these lines I would have given them my most hearty support; but I shall be no party to the construction of those lines if the residents of the whole colony are to bear the burden of them. It is said that these lines can be made for £3,000 a-mile, and I am not prepared to say that that sum will not suffice; but that depends entirely on the kind of railways that are to be constructed. If they are to be made in the same substantial manner as the Southern and Western Railway, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that £3,000 a-mile will not be nearly enough. I presume that sum includes stations and rolling-stock as well as permanent-way, for if it does not there is no provision on the Estimates for them. In answer to a question I put to-day, the Minister for Works said there was an unexpended balance of over £5,000 for surveys, and that the whole of it would be required for surveys now authorised. The Government now propose to make nearly 500 miles of railways, and I should like to know where is the provision for the survey of those lines?—for, certainly, before you commence building a railway a survey must be made. The Premier was very sorry that the leader

of the Opposition questioned his sincerity in this works policy; but if there is one thing more than another that would compel hon. members on this side to question his sincerity, it is to find him coming down with a proposition to construct 500 miles of railway without making any provision for the survey of them. The Minister for Works, in telling us that the trunk lines could be made for £3,000 a-mile, gave as his authority for the statement, Mr. Ballard. I do not wish to say anything against Mr. Ballard as a professional man, but as an engineer for the construction of low-cost railways he has been an utter failure. I am sure that when the Minister for Works comes to inquire into the nature of the work that he has constructed, he will find that the reward he will be entitled to will be a small one. I know something about Mr. Ballard's railway construction, and I do not accept him as an authority on low-cost railways. The Minister for Works laid great stress on the difficulty of getting through the Goganjo ranges, and compared them with the Main Range. He also said the extension from Brisbane to Ipswich was a very expensive one, and that that great expense was caused by a blunder of the then Minister for Works. I believe mistakes were made in the construction of that extension. I believe one of those mistakes was made by Mr. Walsh, who was then Minister for Works, by introducing the system of small contracts; although I am sure he did it with a good intention. He hoped by that means to save money to the country, but the plan turned out a failure. Mr. Walsh was succeeded in office by the present Colonial Treasurer, and I am told that the blunder commenced by Mr. Walsh was continued by that hon. gentleman. So that it is rather refreshing to see the Minister for Works sitting alongside his colleague, and accusing him of blundering in railway construction. The present Colonial Treasurer was not long in office before he quarrelled with the Chief Engineer, and removed him, replacing him with another, whose conduct, I am told on authority, owing to his quarrelling and wrangling with the contractors, led to an enormous increase in the cost of the line. Somehow or other the line came to cost £16,000 per mile—we have the word of the Minister for Works for that. I think you, sir, succeeded the present Premier as Minister for Works, and so were one of the blunderers, according to the Minister for Works. The line was completed, I believe, under you, and I know you pushed the works on a great deal. Is the Minister for Works aware that out of the 100 miles of railway he referred to as constructed by Mr. Ballard so cheaply, that for sixty-three miles the lines are on the surface, and that it is only necessary to throw eighteen inches to two feet from the water-tables into the

centre and throw the ballast on to the top? Is he aware that some portion of the line is fifteen feet under flood-mark? It is preposterous to bring Mr. Ballard forward as a great authority on the introduction of cheap railways. Mr. Ballard has been drummed into our ears for years and years past. When some objection was raised to a trial survey prepared by Mr. Ballard, the Colonial Secretary himself said, "Mr. Ballard made the surveys; I am satisfied that they are correct." We have had too much of Mr. Ballard. I have no hesitation in saying, without fear of contradiction, that he is the most costly railway constructor we have had, and that from the time when he commenced the construction of the railway from Westwood to the Comet no Minister for Works or Commissioner for Railways could tell how one iota of the money voted was expended or what it was expended for. There was not the slightest check upon him; but, for the short time I was in the Works Office, I put a stop to that. I do not wish to say that he misappropriated a single penny or anything of the kind; but I say that it is a bad principle to throw the whole expenditure into the hand of one man to make ducks and drakes of the money as he likes. The Minister for Works, in his answer to me to-night, says that he is in correspondence with Mr. Ballard. On the construction of that line, Mr. Ballard claims to have made a saving of 30 to 50 per cent., which, taken at the lowest, would amount to £180,000. According to the slipshod agreement entered into by the Government of which the Colonial Secretary was head, Mr. Ballard is entitled to be rewarded, though I do not say to that extent. Mr. Ballard may have made a saving, but he has had advantages which no other contractor has had. From the time he commenced the line from Westwood to the Comet he has had the same plant all through. A contractor for twenty miles would require almost as much plant as has sufficed to carry the line to the Comet. It is therefore necessary for the Government to look very carefully and closely into the claims of Mr. Ballard as a cheap railway constructor. The Minister for Works, in his speech, said—

"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."

The hon. gentleman himself stated that the line from Westwood to the Comet cost £5,923 per mile; but I am prepared to

prove that for 63 out of 100 miles of that line the lines are laid down on the surface. The hon. gentleman says Mr. Ballard offered to take a contract, but I hope he does not mean that he is going to revert to the small-contract system. It would appear so from that remark; but I hope, in the event of the Government getting this money, he will do nothing of the sort. The hon. gentleman also made a statement which, coming from him, was most extraordinary. He said—

"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."

I remember long before the hon. member came to this House, when he was stumping about Charters Towers, he was one of the hon. members who talked about the cormorant squatter, the curse of the country. How is it that he has changed his opinions? Is it because he is now surrounded by those cormorants and supports them on the Treasury benches? He goes on to show the immense amounts of money the pastoral tenants have paid into the Treasury—that since Separation to the present time they have paid hundreds of thousands of pounds, sufficient to pay the interest on the whole of the borrowed money. But if they have paid all this money into the Treasury they have got a good deal for it. I have already shown that the pastoral lessees in the western interior hold large tracks of country at the one-sixteenth of a penny per acre. Seeing that such is the case, I am astounded at the Minister for Works coming down as the champion of the pastoral tenants to say that they are ill-used individuals. He goes on further to ask, Did not they contribute towards the general revenue, and did not their men, and the dam-makers and carriers, contribute to the general revenue by taxation? And he tells us the immense sums of money they pay as rents. The hon. member used to be the champion of the digger, but he has used them very scurvily after the handsome way in which they treated him in going over to the squatters, and shelving them. On Wednesday last, however, the hon. member made a most outrageous statement, which might astound anyone, and which was calculated to do more harm to the pastoral tenants than good. I used to take everything the hon. member said for granted, because I thought he was thoroughly acquainted with the subjects upon which he spoke, and a practical digger, but I now believe he's nothing of the sort. When an hon. member gets up in the House, and talks about what he does not understand, I believe he is prepared to do anything.

He drew a very flourishing picture of what might be. He said—

“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.”

Taking the 3,000,000 sheep as a fact, and allowing a quarter of the number for breeders, and allowing for an increase of seventy per cent., the increase per year will be 525,000. Deducting five per cent. for losses would bring the increase down still lower. Then he goes on to calculate the probable yield of wool, which he brings up to 15,000 tons; but, according to my calculation, at the end of five years, it would only amount to 6,056 tons. When Ministers come forward with statements like these, about matters they do not understand, what reliance can we have in them? I hope, for the hon. member's own sake, that *Hansard* will not go beyond this colony to let people know that we have Ministers capable of making such miscalculations. If the hon. member confined himself to what he understands he would do well. I believe the misstatements have not been made wilfully, but hon. members might be led astray and think that a large revenue is likely to be derived from railway traffic. It has been stated as a reason why a large amount of money should be borrowed that we should not run to the money-market every year for small loans—that it will give the capitalists confidence to know exactly what amount we are likely to want. But the capitalists are not to be beguiled by us asking for one million or three millions. The first thing looked to by them is what is the revenue of Queensland and what is her population. I regret very much the statement made by the Colonial Secretary the other night, and I think it will do more damage to the credit of Queensland than any other statement I have heard made in the House. He told us that it was absolutely necessary we should have this loan, so as to keep men employed on the public works of the colony. If it is to go forth to the capitalists that we are borrowing money, not to open up and develop the country, but to keep men employed, then I say a more wretched statement could not be made. I do not believe the Premier means to say anything of the sort.

The PREMIER: I deny having made any such statement.

Mr. MILES: I am quite sure it is in *Hansard*,

The PREMIER: I said I made no such statement, and the hon. member must take my denial.

Mr. MILES: It was the Colonial Secretary who made the statement. He said that it was absolutely necessary to obtain the loan, so that men might be kept employed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member misquotes me entirely. I gave that only as one reason amongst many.

Mr. MILES: I think I am perfectly correct. The hon. member gave that as a reason, and I think it was a most damaging statement to make. During this debate some objection has been taken to the form of the proposed amendment. Most hon. members on this side of the House were pretty sure that they would not be able to carry it, but they considered it was necessary that a division should be taken on the public works policy, and the only way was to submit a motion of this sort, so that a division would be taken and it would be placed on record who was and who was not in favour of this policy, which I believe the Government has no intention—at least in regard to a portion—of carrying out. It will be in the recollection of hon. members that the Colonial Treasurer in his first Financial Statement wanted half-a-million for the construction of trunk lines, and said, further, that some branch lines would be constructed, and he thought the Darling Downs would be the proper place to try the experiment. That alone is sufficient to cause hon. members on this side of the House to look with suspicion upon the whole works policy of the Government. I go further, and say that I positively expect the Colonial Treasurer will yet come down with another financial statement, showing that he does not mean to carry out the works policy stated here. I find no provision here for surveys. The Minister for Works told us that the whole amount available for that purpose will be absorbed by surveys now authorised. Where, then, is the money to come from for the surveys of all these extensions? On the 30th June there was £7,000, which is now reduced to £5,000. No provision is made for surveys of the new extensions unless the £3,000 per mile is intended to cover cost of surveys, stations, and rolling-stock; and, if so, what sort of lines will they be? It may be possible at that cost to include trumpery buildings that will require rebuilding before twelve months are over; but, if the buildings are to be of the same stability as those now in course of erection, the lines cannot be made for that amount. These Loan Estimates have, therefore, been brought down under false pretences. I am glad to hear that the hon. member for Maryborough is to introduce a Bill to sanction a private company building the Burrum line, and I presume, therefore, the House will be relieved from voting the amount down for

this work. The amounts put down by the Government cannot possibly complete the works in a suitable way. We know already that the Brisbane to Sandgate railway has been surveyed, and that the Chief Engineer's estimate is about £2,300 above the amount set down by the Premier, and we also know that the whole line goes through private property. The Minister for Works also stated that negotiations were going on with different parties to give up the land for nothing for a line to the Upper Logan. He will find the moment the line is sanctioned that every owner will stick to his land and will not give it up for nothing, and I am afraid, therefore, the hon gentleman will be much mistaken in his calculation. I believe, myself, in all these branch lines. There is one here which would be the most important of the lot—that from Warwick to Killarney. I have gone through that portion of the district; it is densely settled with agriculturists, and the line would be a remunerative one, I believe. But if it is proposed to carry it straight it will not pay. To make it reproductive there should be a deviation of five miles to get at agricultural settlement, which is out of the track of a straight line. It should go by way of Swan's Creek and through the Warwick Agricultural Reserve, so as to secure the traffic and be a benefit to the parties settled in the district. This line, also, goes through a considerable amount of private land, but no provision for its purchase is made. I freely confess that these branch lines do not require to be built as substantially as the main lines. There is no necessity for high speed; and it is just possible that £2,500 per mile may be sufficient to cover the cost of branch railways in settled parts of the country. The difference, however, made in the matter of the Burrum line seems to me rather singular, for I have always understood that the country through which it runs is very easy for railway building. I find £3,000 put down for it, whilst for a line from Toowoomba to Highfields only £2,500 is set down. There must be some mistake, for there is no comparison as regards the country through which the two lines pass; and my own opinion is that the Highfields line will not be built under £3,500 per mile. A great deal of it, also, runs through private property which can only be resumed at a considerable cost. The whole railway scheme comprised in these Estimates seems to have been badly considered, and will commit the country to an expenditure of which we know little at present. Of course, we shall be told hereafter, when we shall be asked to vote the difference, that it was originally thought the amount was sufficient, but that it had been found it was not. I have not the slightest objection to main lines going into the interior; but, seeing that the agricultural classes have borne the share of the interest on the money borrowed to take

these works to a certain point that will greatly assist in opening up the western interior, it would be unfair to ask them to contribute for any further extensions, considering, especially, that the parties who will derive the benefit pay little or no rent. I am a pastoral lessee, and I have a considerable tract of country in the West; but I am not obliged to the Minister for Works for his advocacy. It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to advocate the cause of the squatters, surrounded as he is by them—we must look at the surroundings; but it is just possible that, some time or other, the hon. gentleman will have to quit his associates, and I am happy to think that he will then change his views again. I consider, myself, that the squatters are like the Colorado beetle, who desolate the country wherever they go. The squatters overstock the country and overrun it, and when they have taken the substance out of it they will not have it any longer. I do not think, therefore, that the pastoral lessees wanted the advocacy of the hon. gentleman; they are quite capable of looking after their own interests, and it would have been far better for the hon. gentleman to have defended the gold miners: it came with bad grace from him to advocate the cause of the pastoral lessees. He was grand last session, and the sessions before, when he used to demand justice for the North. On his last electioneering tour he stated that the North was entitled to half-a-million of money; that the southern part was indebted to the northern part in that sum, and that he would insist upon the amount being down on the next Loan Bill, to balance accounts. He has a pretty good amount on the Loan Estimates in one way and another. Is it to wipe off the claims of the North? I should like to have an assurance on that point. I might be induced to vote with the Government if I thought we should hear no more about justice to the North. I must do the hon. gentleman the justice to say that since he has become Minister for Works I have not heard any more grumbling or outcries about justice to the North. Night after night he used to cry for this justice; but since he has occupied a seat on the Treasury benches we have not heard a single word about it. It is hardly necessary for me to say that if the leader of the Opposition calls for a division he shall have my vote. I do not think that he expects to carry his motion; but he has a perfect right to bring it down, because the great bulk of the people have more faith in him than in the leader of the Government. I believe he has as much responsibility as the Premier. The great bulk of the people expect him to see that justice is done, and they believe that he is defending their interests by the course he has taken on these Loan Estimates. The leader of the Opposition is perfectly right

in bringing forward his amendment, so that a division may be taken and the country may see who votes for and against it.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was sure the leader of the Opposition must be very pleased with the hon. member (Mr. Miles) for having improved his position so much. The House had been very much edified by the hon. member. First of all they had a quotation from a certain paper to show where the setting sun was, but it consisted of the information that certain gentlemen in Queensland and New South Wales had taken up a certain number of square miles of country in South Australia. The next part of his speech was about cheap railways—a subject the hon. member knew nothing about. In introducing that part he had told them how much he had done while head of the Works Office towards improving the colony's railway system. He said that Mr. Ballard had been spending money *ad libitum* without any check, but that while he (Mr. Miles) was in office a certain check was placed upon that gentleman. That was the first the House had ever heard of any change having taken place in Mr. Ballard's system of railway making. He (Mr. Stevenson) never heard of it before. The hon. member, when Minister for Works, told them a great deal about the discoveries he had made, and about his intentions; he stated on one occasion that the Roads Department could be managed with one-third less men and less expense; but did he ever do it? The only thing that he had ever done in the way of retrenchment was to take away a few railway passes from a few clergymen. The third part of his speech consisted of a tirade against the Minister for Works, who, however, did not want anyone to defend him, especially against the attacks of the hon. member for Darling Downs. He (Mr. Stevenson) believed that if the hon. member said anything against the Minister for Works it would be likely to tell in the latter's favour. The hon. member had tried to show that what the Minister for Works had said was not correct. When the hon. member made such a statement the Minister for Works was all the more likely to be correct, and the hon. gentleman with a little explanation was quite right. The hon. gentleman had told the House that twelve million sheep would produce a certain number of tons of wool. The hon. member said the Minister for Works' statement was 50,000 tons, but what the hon. gentleman really said was—

"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."

The hon. member's statement was that the Minister for Works' statement was 50,000 tons, and that his own calculation was 6,056 tons; but this calculation was entirely wrong. Taking the number of sheep at twelve millions, and reckoning a ton at 2,000 lbs., as the Minister for Works had done, the produce would come to nearly 15,000 tons, and made the hon. gentleman as nearly as possible correct. Calculating the ton, on the other hand, to be 2,240 lbs., and allowing $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of wool to the sheep, the result would be exactly 13,400 tons. He (Mr. Stevenson) would go even further and maintain that when the lines were extended to the point the Minister for Works desired a great deal of the wool would be brought down in the grease, and the carriage would be much more. Basing his calculation upon scoured and washed wool, the hon. gentleman had placed the carriage at between £40,000 and £50,000, but it would be more like £70,000 or £80,000 in his (Mr. Stevenson's) belief, even if the wool was sent down washed. He knew many squatters out west who sent their wool 200 miles in the grease to the railway station. When the line went out west the result would be that most of the squatters would forward their wool in the grease, and the carriage would be more than the Minister for Works had stated. The hon. member for Darling Downs also said that the policy of the Government, as disclosed by the Loan Estimates, was the policy of the Opposition, and asked what was the good of the country putting in one set of men to carry out the policy of another set? He (Mr. Stevenson), however, thought it was worse when hon. members on the Opposition benches repudiated their own policy as they had done. There was not the slightest doubt on that point, for it had already been shown that the leader of the Opposition tried to father a policy of progress something like the one the Government had enunciated. The hon. gentleman would have even gone further, for he said at Rockhampton that instead of £3,000,000, £5,000,000 were wanted. Although the charges made by the Opposition had been pretty well answered, he (Mr. Stevenson) would allude to a few matters which had been repeated as objections. Taking the policy as a whole, he had heard no sound objection urged regarding it. The attack of the leader of the Opposition simply amounted to this—that there certainly was a policy, but no information

regarding it—that they were asked to borrow money for something they knew nothing about. The policy of the Government was to borrow three millions of money, which was to last a certain number of years—three or five; and if they admitted that it was right and honest to go to the English market and tell them their requirements for the future, then it was utterly impossible to bring down plans and specifications and books of reference for all the lines in the time. If these things had first to be done, the whole policy of the Government would be at an end. It had also been said that the Government had not shown how these railways were to be made to pay. It might be that in some cases it would be very difficult to show how railways were going to pay; but he might ask the hon. member for Maryborough, did he, when he “bunched” six railways together, give the House any information as to how they were to become remunerative? Was there any likelihood of the Maryborough-Gympie and the Bundaberg-Mount Perry lines paying? It was all very well for the Opposition to ask such a question, but did they, when in office, give the Opposition a chance of taking each line on its merits? He did not suppose that every member believed that every one of the lines on the Estimates would pay, or that every member in the House would vote for them. He was not pledged to vote for all of them as they were on the Estimates, but he took it that the House would hear a discussion on each line, and that each would be taken on its merits. He understood that they were to vote as they liked and believed in respect to each line. That was the Government policy as he understood it. He did not understand that the policy of the Government was to ram these lines down the throats of their supporters and opponents without discussion. They had also been told that the lines were going nowhere. The hon. member (Mr. Miles) had said something about lines going to the setting sun. No doubt they were going there, to a certain extent; at any rate, they were going in a westerly direction. They knew that there was a large tract of country lying to the west—some of the best country in the colony—and these railways were supposed to be going out to develop its resources. The understanding was that these railways should not in any way clash with each other, but should go out and take the legitimate traffic belonging to the part of the country to which they went. A child could surely understand that. The leader of the Opposition stated, when the Premier said these lines would go 130 miles out west, that that would not take them to the good country; but that was a foolish argument, because any child must know that if they went 130 miles they would be at least 130 miles nearer that country. They could

not possibly reach it without going 130 miles, and two of those railways would actually reach that good country. The member for Darling Downs had told them a great deal about squatters out west holding country at 3s. per square mile, but he (Mr. Stevenson) could say that there was very little being held at that price. In the far West, on the Herbert, there might be a few blocks held at 3s. per square mile; but if they took the Barcoo and Thompson all through, they would find that most of the squatters were paying a pound per square mile, as he was himself, for most of their country. Another point upon which he desired to touch—although hon. members were, no doubt, rather tired of it—was the Government banking business. A great deal had been made of that by members opposite, and it was stated that the money proposed to be borrowed would be placed in the Government bank. But the Premier had very clearly stated that no large sums of money would be placed in any bank or banks. This they all understood thoroughly; but, to show the fallacy of the argument or insinuation that was thrown out in regard to this banking business by hon. members opposite, some of whom, he was sure, were now thoroughly ashamed of their statements, he would put the case this way:—Supposing there was any truth in the statement that this money was to be borrowed for the purpose of being placed in the bank, and, as another hon. member insinuated, lent to squatters to improve their western country—even supposing that were the case, he would like to know what prudent banker would take a large deposit for a short time or at call?—or what prudent squatter would like money upon such terms? What squatter would go to a bank where he knew large sums of money were deposited by the Government or other large capitalists for short periods and ask for money on a loan to improve his western country? It would be absurd, because he would know perfectly well that at any time he might be sold out and ruined, whenever this money was called up by the Government or these depositors, whoever they might be. The deposits banks would wish to encourage would be small deposits; with a large number of depositors they could always rely upon a certain amount of capital, because while one was drawing out money others would be paying in. It would be a perfect absurdity for any bank, with business men as directors or with a prudent manager, to take money on such terms for the purpose of lending it out as had been stated. Another matter he wished to refer to was immigration. The hon. member for Maryborough had said he regretted very much that the Government had stopped immigration, and argued that it should

have been continued; but he (Mr. Stevenson) could not understand how any man of prudence or common-sense could say they should pay large sums for immigration at the present time when they were told on all hands, and by hon. members opposite especially, that there was not enough employment for the men at present in the colony. What in the world would be the good of spending a large sum for importing men when those now here could not find sufficient employment? But supposing the hon. member did believe in immigration, he must have a very peculiarly constituted mind if he said he did not believe the country had any right to a loan of this kind for public works. He (Mr. Stevenson) did not see that any principle such as that referred to by the hon. member for Darling Downs—simply borrowing money to find employment for the people—was involved in the loan. He did not believe in that principle, and it was not involved in this estimate; and if the hon. member for Maryborough did not consider that the country was in such a state that it could ask for a loan for the prosecution of public works, he (Mr. Stevenson) could not for the life of him see how it was in a fit state to go on spending large sums of money for immigration. If immigration were continued under existing circumstances, not only would the taxpayers be taxed for bringing people here, but they would be also taxed to keep them from starving when they got here. That would be a very common-sense idea, surely! The thing was absurd; and the man who said he believed in immigration at the present time when there was not work for those who were here, and could not see his way to support a policy like this which would give work for those immigrants, must have a very peculiarly constituted mind. It would be very hard to know what the other side of the House did believe in. Since he had been in the House they had agitated a great many things. First of all they went in for retrenchment; then for six railways; then they said they were prepared to go even further than the present Premier, and instead of a three-million loan would go in for five millions; and now they objected to this loan, and they did so, he believed, simply because they had not the spending of it. He believed the leader of the Opposition did not wish to take office at present, but it was very well known that if he had any chance of coming into power the hon. member for Maryborough would not be the free lance he was at present. That hon. member reminded him (and with him he would include several hon. members on his side of the House) of what Dr. Norman McLeod once said of Beaconsfield, then Disraeli—he said he was a fine bit of wax, ready to take the impression of any seal. He

thought he might say the same of hon. members opposite, so long as it was the seal of office.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich) said, before speaking to the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, which related to the works policy of the Government, he should like to say a few words about immigration. He believed that immigration was the right kind of policy for the colony, but he did not think that this was the time to carry out the works policy proposed by the present Government. He was not opposed to railways if it could be proved that those railways would pay the interest on the cost of construction. If that could be proved to him he should be in favour of railways anywhere and everywhere, either trunk or branch lines; but if it could not be proved, or if they had difficulty in believing it could be proved, that these trunk lines would pay the interest on the cost of construction, they were perfectly justified in opposing them. The Treasurer and the Minister for Works were sanguine that these trunk lines would pay as well as the lines at present completed, and the latter gentleman said the country would not be compelled to pay a single penny in the way of extra taxation for the purpose of making them. If that could be shown to him he would be perfectly willing to support the Government in their works policy; but that was the very point upon which he differed from them. The question was not "trunk *versus* branch lines," but would these trunk lines pay? He had always been in favour of the western extension from Roma towards the Mitchell, and believed that that line, at some future time, would be very likely to pay; but, at the present time, it was not likely that they would be able to construct three trunk lines—the Western, the Central, and the Northern; and, seeing that he did not approve of the construction of the whole of these lines, he should waive his opinion with reference to the extension of the Western line. Even if it could be proved that one of the western extensions—either the Central or Western—would pay, he did not think it could be proved that they would both pay. The hon. member for Normanby (Mr. Stevenson) had stated that it was not the intention that these lines should clash or interfere with each other's traffic; but he had been given to understand that the Western and Central lines were already clashing and competing for the same traffic.

HON. MEMBERS on the Government benches: No, no.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was glad to hear it was not so, but he had been informed from a very good source that the Central line was now taking some of the traffic previously taken by the Western line. But even supposing it could be proved that one

line would pay, he did not think it could be proved that both would pay; and, therefore, although he was in favour of one line going out west, he did not see his way to support the three. The Treasurer, in replying to the leader of the Opposition, mentioned the fact that at the present time there were between 45,000 and 50,000 male adults in the colony, 5,000 of whom were directly employed and other 5,000 indirectly employed by the Government; in other words, that one-fifth of the adult male inhabitants were directly or indirectly connected with the Government, leaving only 40,000; and for this reason—that the population was so small—he could not see his way to encourage the construction of these trunk lines. Was it possible for 40,000 adults, representing about five times that number in population, were able to undertake the construction of trunk lines such a great distance at payable rates? He could not see it at all; and, therefore, he thought that until they had, by immigration, increased the population of the colony, it would not be wise to sanction the construction of so many lines. For the reasons that he could not support the trunk lines he would support the branch lines—namely, that in the settled districts of the colony they had population. Where they had people there they would find traffic not only from the people being settled there, but also from the occupations in which they were engaged. Many of them were engaged in agricultural pursuits, and the produce they brought to market would make these branch lines payable. Of course, it was just possible that the whole of the branch lines in the policy of the Government might not be payable, but two or three would be payable; for instance, those to Fassifern and Mount Esk. If any of the branch lines would pay these two would, because these portions of the colony were more densely populated than any others that he was aware of. He noticed, however, that there was no mention made of one branch line which he believed would pay better than even the two he had referred to—that was the line from Oxley to South Brisbane. It was a very short line indeed, and the trade was already there for the purpose of making it pay. Even at the present time, if that line were constructed it would pay the interest on the cost of construction, because the traffic of the line from coal alone would go a very long way indeed towards making that line a payable one. In the evidence taken before the railway commission in reference to that line, some time ago, it was stated that the production of coal in the western district was about 64,000 tons per annum, and without exaggeration he thought he might safely say that, if they had a line to deep-water on the Brisbane River, that product might be very

easily increased by at least ten times, or to 640,000 tons. In reference to this matter the Premier mentioned a night or two ago in the House, that it was not so much from the want of railway communication that coal-mining in West Moreton did not pay, as it was from the quality of the coal; but he (Mr. Macfarlane) could state that the quality of the coal from the mines in that district was a great deal better than many of them had been led to believe. They often found that anything that was very near to them or was in common use was not looked upon as of great value. There was an old proverb that a prophet was not honoured in his own country, and he thought that was perfectly true in reference to the coal in this district. Because it was so near to them and they had been using other coal for gas-making purposes this coal had been looked upon lightly and as of little value, when, in reality, if it had the chance of being taken to a vessel from the pit-head by railway transit, it would compare favourably with any of the Newcastle coal. By the present mode of transit it was so knocked about that when it got to market it was very much broken; but if it arrived in a sound state—such as when it left the pit-head, he believed it would bring quite as much as Newcastle coal. Not long ago, he and the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan) visited one of the coal-pits in the West Moreton district, where they saw lumps of coal so large that they could not lift them; and if that coal could be brought down to the shipping by rail, it would be quite as good and sound as any coal he had seen in the old country. He believed that it was simply from the want of railway communication that the produce of coal in the West Moreton district was not doubled ten, or perhaps twenty, times over. He might mention that not long ago a merchant in Brisbane sent to Ipswich to know if the coal proprietors could supply a ship that was about leaving the port, with coal. The reply was that they could do so, but that it was a question of time. It turned out, however, that the ship would have to sail in about ten days, and, the weather being broken at the time, it was found impossible to supply her with coal, and she had to go away in ballast. Now, had this line been in existence that coal would have been sent down and the whole colony would have benefited by it, simply from the fact that there would be an increase of population and the consumption of dutiable goods by these persons would pay for the construction of the line in a few years, even if the line itself did not pay any interest. He thought, therefore, that this branch line, above all others mentioned, ought to take first place in the programme of the Government works policy. Just to show that the coal in that district was not so bad as repre-

sented, he would refer to the fact, which had been already referred to by the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn), that the Ipswich Gas Company was using coal raised in that district. When that gas company commenced operations they were under the impression that the local coal would not answer for the purpose of gas-making, and they accordingly sent to Newcastle for coal, but when that supply was exhausted they thought they would try the local coal, and they found that it was better than even Newcastle coal for making gas. That had been found out by actual experience, and the Brisbane Gas Company, which had for a very long time been using Newcastle coal, were now giving Ipswich coal a fair trial, and he predicted that if it had a fair trial it would be found quite as good, if not superior to what that company had been using in the past. He thought for these reasons they should do all they could to encourage the coal traffic of West Moreton. With reference to this railway policy of the Government, he should like to ask—was it an afterthought? He thought it must be an afterthought, because, if they had had in view coming down to the House with a works policy of this kind, he could not for the life of him see how they could have exercised that arbitrary decision in reference to the dismissals from the Ipswich workshops. If they had had this works policy in view at that time, he believed that they would never have acted in the way they did in regard to those dismissals. It appeared to him that at the time of those dismissals they had no idea whatever of proposing to the colony such a public works policy as that now before the House. He quite agreed with their branch railway policy, and he hoped it would be carried out; but he could not see how, with such a small population, the colony would be able to make the trunk lines payable. It was for those reasons he should support the motion of the hon. leader of the Opposition. There were several large sums on the Loan Estimates that would be of an unproductive nature; but still he approved of some of them—such, for instance, as the improvement of the Brisbane River, as that must go hand in hand with any extension of the railway for the development of the coal traffic. He could not give his consent to some of the public buildings he saw on the list, as they absorbed too large a sum of money which might be better spent. Had the loan policy of the Government been for one-half of the amount proposed it would have been amply sufficient for all purposes at the present time. He would not say more than that he approved of that part of the policy which provided for branch railways.

Mr. KATES said that he had carefully reviewed the speeches which had been made during the present debate, and he

could not agree altogether with the remarks made by hon. members on his side of the House who objected to the proposed Loan Estimates because no data, particulars, plans and specifications of the railway had been laid on the table. Even had those plans, &c., been laid on the table, he should have protested against the extension of trunk lines of railway because he was convinced that they would not prove reproductive, and he was prepared to oppose any public works that would not be reproductive. The hon. Minister for Works had told them over and over again that the railways in the settled districts did not pay, and that there was a falling off in the receipts notwithstanding the reduction in the number of trains running and the increase of fares. He (Mr. Kates) had himself noticed a falling off week after week; but, if that was the case as regarded lines in the settled districts, how could railways be expected to pay in the unsettled districts where one month's trains would suffice to bring down all the wool and hides and to take up all the rations and stores, and during the other eleven months a large staff of men and gangers, to keep the line in order, would have to be employed? They had been told by the Premier that a sudden stoppage of public works would bring about a shock that would prove most disastrous to the colony; but he would ask whether they were to perpetuate a system of non-paying works for the purpose of keeping a lot of men employed who were mere birds of passage, and who merely stopped to pick up any crumbs they might see falling about? He believed that instead of increasing our expenditure with a decreasing population, what the colony really wanted was rest and breathing time. They had been over-legislating for the country; but he with his great faith in the resources of the colony believed that everything would righten itself in time. What they should do first was to look to the settled districts and put them in order, and then look to the extensions to the west. He did not, for one, think the squatters out west would thank the Government for giving them railways, but would rather have leases given to them, so that they would be able to go to their bankers with something tangible in their hands. The Premier told the House that he expected a large revenue from the lands through which these extensions passed; but if they were to refer back to the time when the lands in the Western Railway Reserves were put up to auction they would find that there were no bidders for those lands, except the holders of the stations or their representatives. If the present run-holders had better leases more rent could be expected from them, and they could not object to pay more if they had leases for, say, twenty-one years. It must be borne in mind that these pro-

posed trunk lines could not be compared with those from Sydney or Melbourne, as they went from one centre to another, whilst these at the end of 130 miles might land in a swamp. In regard to the branch lines, he considered money would be well spent on them, and he should support them accordingly. The hon. member for Burnett told them that the chief reason for his supporting the present Government was that they had not come down with any proposition for additional taxation; but he (Mr. Kates) wished to know whether the appropriation of the Railway Reserve Fund was not additional taxation, or whether the Divisional Boards Bill would not lead to additional taxation under a different name? At present they had to pay £476,000 in the shape of interest upon their loans, and if they borrowed another £3,000,000 that would bring it up to £600,000, and surely that would lead to additional taxation? Russia in its present state of insolvency would be in almost a better position. Did the Premier think that if he went into the market now he would be able to raise a loan at something like 92 or 93? He did not think the hon. gentleman would be able to do so, as bankers and people at home well knew that our debt was something like £11,000,000, and that our population was decreasing. Thus there would be a great sacrifice if the hon. gentleman went in for a loan such as he proposed at the present time. Another reason was that their 4 per cent. debentures were quoted at something like 92, whilst the debentures of their neighbours stood at from 95 to 96; for that reason it behoved the Government to be very cautious how they went into the market. Coming to the Loan Estimates, he saw that there was £100,000 put down for immigration. Since Separation they had spent £1,450,000 on immigration alone, and for that sum they had brought in a lot of people from Europe; but instead of remaining here they had left the colony; and therefore, unless there was a re-organization of the immigration system, he should be in favour of putting nothing down for that purpose at present: it would be far better to utilise the £100,000 proposed to re-purchase the magnificent estates on the Darling Downs, and invite people from the neighbouring colonies to come and settle upon them. Then there was a sum of £418,000 put down for the completion of railways already in course of construction: of course, the country being committed to those works, it was necessary to raise that money by loan. Then there was a sum of £20,100 for re-construction of the Central Railway, and for buildings and sidings for the Southern and Western Railway. To that item he had no objection. But with regard to the sum of £52,000 for a line from Brisbane to Sandgate, which was next on the list, he must say that it was not at all wanted, as there

was already an excellent road between the two places—in fact, if they had such a good road on the Darling Downs they should never think of asking for any railway. With regard to £50,000 put down for a branch line from Warwick to Killarney, it was put down as being twenty miles; but that was as the crow flies, and went through very inferior country; the line ought to take a crescent form through the fertile valleys of Farm, Swan, and Freestone Creeks, to be of any benefit to the State as well as to the farmers and settlers in that rich locality. The next item was £249,000 for the improvement of harbours and rivers. He considered that the money for that work should come out of revenue; and had the Premier used the pruning-knife as he promised, there would have been a good deal saved sufficient to have carried out some of the improvements of the harbours and rivers. The next items were £62,650 for roads and bridges, £100,000 to meet the first expenditure of road boards, and £200,000 loans to local boards. With regard to the last, as that sum was to bear interest at five per cent., no objection could be raised against it. Coming to the item of buildings, for which a sum of £80,000 was put down, he noticed the whole of the Darling Downs was not at all well looked after, with the exception of £1,500 that was put down for the Dalby Hospital as a sop to that electorate. He next came to the sum of £70,000, which was put down for electric telegraph construction; and in regard to that he considered that they would be able to get on without many of the extensions it was proposed to make for some years to come. They had been told that the Postmaster-General had been obliged to shut up a great many telegraph offices in the settled districts; and it should be remembered that all the extensions they now proposed would render necessary the employment of a large number of additional officers. With regard to the £10,000 that was put down for the defences of the colony, there was no necessity whatever for such an expenditure. There was no probability of the colony being invaded, especially as the Russians at the present time had quite enough to do to look after the Nihilists. He had put together a few items which he considered should constitute the public works to be carried on by means of loan, and for that he had set down a sum of £1,315,000. That would include everything; but if the branch lines were omitted the sum would be reduced to £899,000. If the Premier could see his way clear to reduce his loan to that he would give him his support, but, if not, he should fail in his duty to his constituents were he not to support the motion of the hon. leader of the Opposition.

Mr. HILL said he had not had the advantage of being present at the commencement of the debate, but he had very

carefully read the reports of it since his return to Brisbane; and he must say that the conclusion he had come to was this—that he had never seen a weaker attack, and never one more strongly repelled and every argument more thoroughly rebutted. He was in great hopes from the attack having been made that it might clear the atmosphere, and smooth the way for making the rest of the session more pleasant to both sides of the House and more beneficial to the country, and also that it would have the effect of causing less obstruction than had hitherto been practiced by hon. members on the opposite side of the House. He could not but think from the half-hearted way in which the leader of the Opposition brought forward his attack on the Government that the hon. gentleman had been forced on to such a course by his followers. He would take one paragraph in the hon. gentleman's speech, in which he said—

"If I am defeated on this motion, it will be because a sufficient number of members 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."

He saw a corollary to that which the hon. gentleman might have considered when he made that speech—namely, that if the members of the Government side of the House did not keep the present Ministry in their places, but turned them out, they would have to put in another Ministry. But where were they to get another Ministry from? The late Ministry or their party had, as had been said that evening by the hon. member for Mackay, gone through twenty-three changes altogether. They had failed in their administration. They had come in with a full Treasury, had had the best times to work through, and then left office with an empty Treasury, and in debt. Hon. members had seen that before, with a supposed Liberal Ministry, when the so-called squatter Ministry under the present Colonial Secretary took office eight or nine years ago. The Treasury was then empty and everything disorganised, but when that hon. gentleman was turned out of office he left to the Opposition a clean sheet and a good balance to work upon. But what was the result? Why, the so-called Liberal Government not only filled every office, but created new offices where they were not wanted, and altogether plunged the country into a hopeless muddle and extravagance. Then, when the present Ministry took office they had the unenviable and painful task of extricating the country from the ruinous position in which it was left by their predecessors and to begin lopping off all unnecessary expenses, and the result was that a party cry was raised by the Opposition against the reductions that were made, and obstruction was put in the way

of the Government doing that which it was well known it was necessary for them to do. The leader of the Opposition, in referring to the 130 miles extension of the trunk lines, said that they would lead to nowhere; but he (Mr. Hill) would reply that these extensions would bring the railway on to the verge of good country. He did not mean to say that he was wholly in favour of the loan policy brought forward by the Government—in fact, it would be very hard for any Government to bring forward a loan policy which would suit everyone; but there was one thing which he endorsed, and that was the policy for the extension of the trunk lines. He would show how those lines would be reproductive and would pay. That had been already shown, but he wanted to have his say on the subject. With regard to the exception taken by the leader of the Opposition to the Charters Towers extension, he (Mr. Hill) contended that if the extension went—as was stated—towards the setting sun, it went in the very best direction, as it would go through the very best country, and the country which could be most easily tapped. He was aware that such an extension might not be palatable to the Brisbane people, but seeing that Brisbane had the undoubted advantage of being the seat of legislation, and that all her wants were known and attended to, it was very shortsighted policy for her to attempt to divert a trade which must, like water, find its own legitimate channel. It did not matter whether the greatest part of the trade would be at Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, or Somerset, so long as the money collected at those places flowed into the Treasury at Brisbane, and thence was redistributed through the whole of the colony. Looking at the component parts of the late Ministry and their supporters, he could not wonder such was the case. When they vacated the Treasury benches there were no less than three Brisbane lawyers in the Ministry. Queen street was represented by the Colonial Treasurer, and for an outside representative they had the hon. member for the Logan. The Ministry now in power was, on the other hand, tolerably representative of all parts of the colony, and the colony's industries were also fairly represented in it. They had been sneered at as being a squatting Ministry, because two gentlemen connected with pastoral pursuits were members of it; but who in the House did not really and honestly consider that the squatters had as good a right, at all events, to a share in the legislation of the colony as the lawyers? He would rather see a Ministry composed of any other material—merchants, squatters, farmers, anything but lawyers; and when a Ministry was reduced to putting three

lawyers on the Treasury benches it was quite time it should be turned out: the legal element was not entitled to such an undue amount of representation. But the whole policy was to draw everything to Brisbane—Brisbane was to be centralized. The transcontinental railway which they fostered, and under the plea of which the extension to Roma was first made, was for the purpose of benefiting Brisbane, without any consideration for the interests of the northern or western districts. The hon. member for Maryborough, referring to the vote of no confidence, said he would admit that on his side of the House they were not strong enough to form a Government, and that his hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, had no wish to take office. He (Mr. Hill) should think not. But why did he bring forward this motion? Was it to make confusion worse confounded? His (Mr. Griffith's) former colleague, the member for Maryborough, had had a great opportunity of forming an opinion about his supporters and the men around him, and yet he admitted that the materials for forming a Government did not exist on that side of the House. It was very complimentary to his associates to say so, and it must be taken for granted that the opinion was a pretty correct one. Supposing the leader of the Opposition did carry this vote, in what position would he find himself? He would be like Actæon—torn to pieces by his own dogs—dozens of them all seeking office. He had a kaleidoscopic Ministry last year, constantly changing its phases: but there was one focus upon which that kaleidoscope was always centred, and that focus was Brisbane. There were three very necessary qualities for Ministers—ability, knowledge, and honesty. There were plenty of gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House who, he (Mr. Hill) guaranteed, had plenty of ability, and could express their thoughts in elegant and good language: there were fewer of them who had any real knowledge of what they were legislating about. Their legislation did not go beyond the length of the railway line, and if it was only to extend their knowledge it would be advisable to push the trunk lines out. If they had real knowledge of the country and its resources they would not be so short-sighted in their policy of trying to concentrate everything into Brisbane. Brisbane might be a great capital, and he sincerely hoped in future years would be the capital of a great nation, but let it be so on fair and legitimate grounds. Let it be contented with its own legitimate portion of the trade, and with the knowledge that every shilling of revenue collected in the colony must pass through its coffers. The hon. member for Maryborough also referred to the Railway Reserves Act.

The hon. member did not refer to it with such zeal as he had noticed on previous occasions. The Railway Reserves Act was about the only piece of legislation which emanated from the Opposition when they were in power, and as a piece of legislation it was one which he (Mr. Hill) condemned utterly, for it was founded upon principles of repudiation. If any private firm or mercantile institution had taken such a foul and base advantage of a clause in a lease it would be held up to public odium, and the public would be very shy of doing business with it again. If it was passed on the principle of doing evil that good might come, very little good had resulted from it. Its main result had been to shut up the town of Roma. What should be a prosperous and rising township, surrounded by a yeoman population, was now hemmed in by a wealthy company. The hon. member for Mitchell predicted when the Bill was first introduced that such would be the case, saying that any man with money in his pocket could buy 10,000 acres of land there, picking out the eyes of the country at 10s. an acre—adding that the authors of the measure had the impudence to pretend to be the poor men's friends. The result then predicted had happened, and the land was now locked up. The hon. member for Maryborough said that if these liabilities must be incurred they must from the public estate and landed property obtain the means of paying the interest on the increased expenditure involved, and a few sentences further on plainly intimated his preference for a land-tax. A land-tax had no terrors for him (Mr. Hill). Although solely engaged in pastoral pursuits, he yet, like the Colonial Secretary, did not own an acre of land in Queensland, and did not know that he ever should. He was not possessed with an earth-hunger, and, when the time came for him to buy his run, if he was not in a position to do so he should be quite content to take up his bed and walk further west. There was plenty of room there, and those railways would facilitate his making a graceful exit. The policy as shadowed forth by the hon. member for Maryborough was the most short-sighted one which any Government, even in these times, could hint at. When the standard wealth of the colony was disposable in unlimited quantities, it was surely most unstatesmanlike to hold such a threat over the heads of those who were possibly contemplating buying their land, especially at so early a stage of the colony's history. The note of warning had already been sounded in Victoria, and they all knew what had been the effect of the land-tax there, and that when an unscrupulous Government wished to gain popularity they had only to threaten to put on another turn of the screw; and they might put on so

many as to tax the land to its full annual value. Could it be wondered at, that with such a tax staring them in the face, capitalists should be rather shy of investing in land—that they should hesitate before placing themselves, bound hand and foot, in the power of any possible Government that might be formed in these colonies? The man who invested his money in corner allotments or bank shares was safe; he was either not taxed or he could turn his property into money quickly, while the man who locked up his money in land handed himself over in the most confiding manner to the tender mercies of the Government. A land-tax he considered an odious infliction, and the mere mention of it by an ex-Premier was most injudicious and likely to be detrimental to a rising colony whose chief wealth lay in her land. The constant cry of the Opposition throughout the debate had been, "How are you going to pay the interest on this loan?" He (Mr. Hill) would point out one way in which that could be done. In his own districts alone, North and South Gregory, there was an area of 80,000,000 acres of land, which last year brought in a rental of £15,383, which at five per cent. represented a capital of £307,660. If a capital value of 1s. per acre were established upon that land it would represent a value of £4,000,000, representing at 5 per cent. £200,000 per annum, instead of £15,383 as at present. The hon. member for Darling Downs had referred in what he considered a most contemptible manner to the excessively low rentals paid by the squatters in those districts. The ensuing 30th September would show that not only were his constituents paying full value for their country, but that they would throw up a considerable amount of it, as it was not worth the mere peppercorn rent they were now paying. He had stated this on a former occasion, and further information had convinced him as to its correctness. The rental quoted just now was that paid on the 30th September, 1878; but the rental due from those districts during the current year was £22,199. Even that was a small rental for so large an acreage, but it showed that even under existing circumstances those runs were contributing in a constantly progressive rate towards the general revenue. He had mentioned the value of 1s. per acre being established upon those vast tracts of magnificent country, but he believed that, taking it all in all—the good with the bad—and there was very little bad, it would represent a value of 5s. per acre, at which it could be rapidly alienated if access were given to it; and would then return to the general revenue an income on a capital value of £20,000,000. That was only from the district of the Gregory, and did not take into account the enhanced value of the land in the Mitchell, the Burke, and

the Warrego districts. The usual Opposition sneers had been made at the close population of those districts, consisting of sheep and kanakas; but sheep were an admirable thing for the colony, and every year the five or six million sheep in the colony brought in about a million sterling from England, which was distributed amongst every class of the community. It would be far better for the colony if they had, as they easily might have, twenty-five or thirty millions of sheep, instead of six millions. Sheep paved the way for civilisation; they did not, as the hon. member (Mr. Miles) said, like the Colorado beetle, leave a wilderness behind them. There were flourishing towns in New South Wales, such as Wagga Wagga and Albury, which he had recently visited, which were mainly supported by the sheep stations in their neighbourhood. He looked upon the pastoral industry as the mainstay of the colony, and following on that came mining. In almost every instance the squatter went first, and the miner followed. He was not inimical to farmers, but he considered the agricultural interests entirely subsidiary. It was to the advantage of the farmers to push forward the pastoral and mining industries as much as possible, because on them depended their sole market. What with the uncertainty of the climate and the distance of the best farming lands from ports, directly production exceeded consumption the farmers would suffer very great hardships and misery. Every man could not live under his own vine and eat his own pumpkins, if our farmers had to compete with other colonies, such as New Zealand and South Australia in the London market, for the only staple commodities they could produce. With regard to the pastoral interest, he would take the opportunity of thanking the Minister for Works for his splendid defence of the squatting community. The hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles) made an attack upon that hon. gentleman for having done so; and the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge) referred to the squatters as though they were not able to defend themselves. That defence came with an excellent grace and with double force from a man who was not himself a squatter, and who had once condemned them wholesale. He trusted the example would be followed, and that other hon. members would be converted to a different view of the squatters from that they had previously held. The squatters had been more sinned against than sinning. Some squatters in the early days had, no doubt, erred and showed a greed for land; but they had been sufficiently punished, and the whole class should not still be branded as almost worse than felons. If the occupation was such a pleasant, rosy one, and if the robbery from

the country was such that squatters could make gigantic fortunes by doing nothing, hon. members who inveighed against them should just try their hands and see how they would like it. An hon. member (Mr. Rutledge) in his speech alluded to the Ipswich workshops' dismissals as not in accordance with the professed intentions of the Government to carry on a works policy with vigour, and it had also been said that to compare a private financial transaction with a public one was unfair. He considered that in both cases a very fair comparison might be instituted between private business and the business of a Government. In his own line he had seen a station encumbered with a lot of useless men and loafers. Presently a change came o'er the spirit of the dream. Another manager came in, and without any special spirit of retrenchment discharged the men right and left with a view to reorganisation. More men were put on, and the station was turned into a thriving and profitable one in a very short time. No doubt, the Public Works Office as well as other offices were found to be overloaded with useless men, and it required a man having strength of will and the courage of his opinions to clear them, as had been done. It was therefore unfair to use that as a party cry to raise ill-feelings. With regard to the loan vote, the Government had used a wise discretion in showing what they wanted, and stating that they proposed to spread the loan over a period of three years. Were he (Mr. Hill) about to put a large tract of country under sheep and found he had not the necessary means he should probably go to a banker for assistance. If he then went with a scheme and asked for an overdraft to carry him on till next year, and, getting that concession, went again year after year with the same request, he should expect to have the screw put on, as it probably would be. But if he went and showed a comprehensive scheme by which a certain amount of money would enable him to tide over a certain number of years, and result in a profitable business—as the Government in the case of the management of the country had done—there would be a reasonable expectation of his getting the money on good terms. The hon. member for Wide Bay (Mr. Bailey) made an allusion to recriminations and personalities which had been made in the House. No one had regretted their introduction into debate more than he had—ever since they were introduced in the first instance by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member seems to give the members on that (Ministerial) side the advice that they were to be the attacked party but not the attacking. But surely neither he nor anyone else could expect that those hon. members,

when smitten on one cheek, were going to turn to the smiter the other: if he did he was very much mistaken. They had the power to reply, and they should cultivate it. They were not going to be brow-beaten by members of the Opposition, but should repel any attempt of the kind; and therefore it would be a very good thing if both sides mutually agreed to abstain altogether from personalities. The same hon. member made an allusion not calculated to provoke amiable or good feelings when he referred to close settlement as meaning settlement of kanakas and sheep. The hon. member knew well enough that kanakas had been done away with entirely—that the law did not permit them to exist any longer—in that district. Without wishing to enter upon the whole question, he might say, as an employer of them at one time, that they were introduced in a time of very great need. He and many others in a similar position would have been entirely ruined had it not been for their introduction then, because at that time settlement had progressed faster than any possible scheme of immigration could supply the necessary labour, and the Crown lessees were compelled to have recourse to that kind of labour. Settlement was not now progressing so fast, and that necessity had ceased to exist with him; it ceased to exist eight or nine years ago, and since then he had never employed kanakas. Considering as he did that he owed a debt of gratitude to kanakas, he did not care to hear them abused or spoken of in slighting terms. With regard to the general policy of the Government, he was prepared to give his unflinching adherence. There might be some minor item of which he did not thoroughly approve, but those items should have rendered the policy more reconcilable and more palatable to the members of the Opposition—at least, if they had spoken what they believed to be true from their seats in the House.

Mr. PATERSON said the hon. member who had just sat down had struck a chord which they could all understand when he said that certain items in the Government proposals on loan account should meet the approval of members of the Opposition. He (Mr. Paterson) believed that some of those items were put on with the view of meeting their approval and the approval of their constituents, and not because the Government themselves thoroughly approved of them. The words of the amendment now under discussion were, "The proposals of the Government, in relation to the construction of public works, are unsatisfactory to this House." The debate, he considered, would do considerable good—it would define parties more and more, and, although some hon. members might think the time wasted, the discussion could not but be

advantageous to the country in general and the constituencies in particular. The remarks he should make would not be spoken from what might be called an ultra-party point of view. In anything he might say on the different phases of the question, it would be understood that he did so from his own conviction and from his personal knowledge; and that he was not guided to any great extent, if at all, by what was termed special partisanship. He held that concurrently with the Loan Estimates the Government should have introduced a measure by which the country should have been guaranteed that, if there were any deficiency in the payment of interest after the working expenses of the proposed trunk and branch lines had been met, such deficiency would come from a special source, and not from the general revenue. That was the real point at issue. The financial basis of the proposal was the weak point of the Government structure, and he should be able to prove that he had sufficient ground for making that statement. There was also a very reprehensible dearth of particularity respecting the railway proposals of the Government. They did not say, for instance, where the Central line was to run ultimately, and not one of the Ministers gave any intimation as to the direction in which the Charters Towers line would travel. Hon. members, however, were told, through an interjection, that the three trunk lines were going towards the setting sun. But were they going north-west or south-west? In the summer time the sun sets south of west, and in the winter time north of west, and it was of very great importance to his constituents whether the Charters Towers line was to be projected towards the setting place of the summer sun or the winter sun. The same dearth of particularity was evinced in respect to branch lines. Hon. members had no data upon which to form a judgment—they had not even the information they would look for as private individuals—namely, particulars as to estimated traffic, the particular route sketched out, the estimated cost of the line and of the land. The Government might even have given an indication of the population in the branch line districts, and the products which were grown in the vicinity of the contemplated routes. In the name of common-sense, were they not entitled to as much information as a private company had to supply when they asked the public to take up shares in their venture?—but the House was asked, and it was the burden of the whole song of Ministers in advocating the loan, to believe in their sincerity and earnestness. He did so, but he asked hon. members opposite to allow the same amount of sincerity and earnestness as they claimed for themselves. The Opposition were emphati-

cally sincere in seeking for the items and data which common-sense men would require. It could not, also, be but noticed that the railway policy the House was asked to sanction was not the railway policy of a few months ago. There was a difference—and he was sorry to say it—of something like £330,000 on the trunk lines, and in other respects there was an alteration. The policy first enunciated was more preferable to him; but from the time it was first disclosed until now a fresh scheme had been conceived, and after a very short period of gestation the Government brought forth a brood of branch lines which the country generally did not approve of. They had excluded from their programme the branch lines in the immediate vicinity of Brisbane that had been looked for and desired, and had included lines which nobody had ever heard of until the Estimates were produced. And this policy had been framed with a view of meeting the farming constituencies, the Premier having charged the Opposition, the other evening, with having raised the question of branch lines simply for the purpose of setting the farmers against the squatters. He did not believe it was ever raised; there never was any special information given by the Opposition members in the new House as to what branch lines should be constructed; but they knew that one member of the Ministry was not in favour of branch lines. Some time ago that member placed the Charters Towers line on a par with the Bundaberg line. It was too bad of the Government to ask the House to swallow a pill part of which was not believed in by a member of the Cabinet. The Postmaster-General was that member. He might as well here say that in his candidature it was repeatedly asserted that the Liberal party were going to plunge the country into a needless expenditure which would bring ruin upon it; that they were only going to construct branch lines out of loan and stop the construction of main lines, unless there was a guarantee as to the payment of the interest. The Liberal party were spoken of as the "branch-line" party, and the present Government party were called the "trunk-line" party. In the Rockhampton *Bulletin* of November 8, Mr. Buzacott was reported as having said, at his election meeting, that "he held that unless borrowed money was spent on reproductive works the inevitable result would be increased taxation." That was a noble sentiment which he, as one of the Opposition, repeated that evening. They were not in favour of the expenditure of loans on unproductive works, and he was sorry the Government had not disclosed anything more than their belief that the land sales would cover the interest. The House

was entitled to something more than assertion. He believed that the Cook gold-fields would carry a population of 50,000—the hon. member for Cook went even further not long ago—but would any man speculate on the mere statement of this belief? Mr. Buzacott went on to say that “he was in favour of liberal expenditure on public works, especially on great trunk lines,” and “as railway extension was a matter of such consequence, and involving so enormous an expenditure, it was imperative that the system under which it was carried out should be financially sound.” Had they the figures which were necessary to enable them to judge? Mr. Buzacott next said that “long lines of railway always paid, but short lines did not pay;” and yet a part of the Ministerial scheme was branch lines. They had brought in a bunch of ten lines, of which the Postmaster-General believed that six would not pay. Then Mr. Buzacott said—and this was the point—that “he thought the Government would not be justified in accepting tenders for the Bundaberg and Charters Towers lines, and hoped they would not do so, however much such a course might affect them during elections. He sincerely trusted that at a time like this they would subordinate the interests of their party to regard for the interests of the colony.” Did the Premier say that the English of that was not that the Postmaster-General did not believe in short lines, and that he trusted the Government would follow out what he had stated, which was that it would not be to the general interest of the country if the Government accepted tenders for the Bundaberg and Charters Towers lines? Did he not speak of them in the same breath? The House knew very well that the Bundaberg line was stigmatised as a blot in the bunch, and here they had the Postmaster-General speaking of the Charters Towers railway as a twin line to it. In reply to a question, Mr. Buzacott also said “that if returned he would advocate the delay of all public works of a non-reproductive character.” Had he since discovered that the Charters Towers line would pay, or had he knowledge that the additional taxation to which he referred would not now accrue? The Postmaster-General also, on the same occasion, said that there was “a marked distinction between trunk and branch lines—the former ran through Crown lands, whilst the latter ran through alienated lands, and this Ministers proposed to do at the cost of the taxpayers.” Had it been shown that these branch lines proposed by the Government were not going through private property and would not still be at the cost of taxpayers? Coming now to the provision for a branch line to Clermont, he was exceedingly disappointed that such a small amount was put down for it. It would be

worthless; it would commit the country to a small length of twelve or twenty miles which would be of no use. It was always understood that the branch to Clermont would receive full sanction; it was only sixty-five miles long, and he knew that the inhabitants of Clermont and Copperfield would be much disappointed and disgusted at finding such a small sum as £50,000 set down as an instalment. It would have been better for the Government to have left it out altogether, or else have made ample provision for the whole length of line, as they might very well have done. This provision was not in consonance with what he must say was not an unfair treatment of the Central district. The Government had given fair consideration to the wants of the Central district, with the exception of the Clermont branch. He agreed with the Minister for Works’ statement, that the Loan Estimates did not go far enough, and, with all respect to members sitting on the Opposition benches, and on the Government benches also, he was bound to say that there should have been provision for a longer extension of the Central main line; it should have gone to the Thompson, and just now there was every inducement to adopt that extension in consequence of the cheap rate at which steel rails could be supplied; and in view of these circumstances he had had every hope that the Government would have gone on to the Thompson River, which was only seventy miles further. When speaking on this point, he might as well say he was surprised to find, the other evening, that an ex-Premier—the hon. member for Maryborough—displayed a want of knowledge respecting railway surveys in the Central district; and, as Ministers had not vouchsafed much information on the subject, he thought it his duty to point out that the Ministry were in an excellent position to go on with the works there. They had the fullest information. In the year 1874, Mr. Willoughby Hannam, surveying engineer, reported that he had found certain gaps in the Drummond Ranges and a very feasible route through that range. Subsequently it was thought advisable to take the line in a northerly direction, and Mr. Hannam was instructed to thoroughly explore the whole of the ranges. The result was that the original route picked out was the one through which the railway would pass. Mr. Hannam had been about five years, with the exception of a short time he was engaged on the permanent works, exploring these ranges, and he thought it was just as well that hon. members should know that the Government were in no difficulty about carrying on that line, or as to defining the route. He knew that Mr. Ballard reported some time since that all the features and intricacies of those

ranges were fully and carefully determined. The truth should prevail at all times, and hon. members should know that the Government had information with respect to that line which they might have given to the House. With regard to the extension from Retreat to the Thompson, he wished to point out that although this proposal was only to carry the line 130 miles, still it was indicated by the Minister for Works that this was only on account—that it was contemplated to make a further extension, and he was very glad to hear it. The extension from Retreat to the Thompson would firstly benefit the Mitchell District, and, excluding the Gregory districts from the calculation, the cost of 200 miles of railway from Retreat to the Thompson, at £3,000 per mile, would be £600,000, the annual interest on which, at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., would be £27,000. It had been said by the Minister for Works that he believed that that line when constructed would return an amount equal to what was now obtained from the working of the Central Railway, and he (Mr. Paterson) had figures to prove that that could be done; but what he wanted to show was that, even on that footing, there would still be a deficiency of interest, and, as that was the point upon which he practically staked his election at Rockhampton, it was as well that he should be clear upon it. The interest on the line, as he had said, would be £27,000, and deducting two-thirds of that amount, or 3 per cent., namely, £18,000—that was on the understanding that the 3 per cent. would be paid after paying working expenses—deducting that from the $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would leave a balance of interest deficient of £9,000. Now the real question was, would the pastoral lessees receive any benefit from that line or any of the trunk lines? The Minister for Works had said that he once believed these lines would benefit the pastoral lessees, but he had since altered his opinion. But would he or any hon. member say that the pastoral lessees would not receive any benefit at all—that they would not receive an immediate monetary benefit the moment these lines were completed? He did not believe any member would have the courage to say that they would not receive any benefit. No doubt the colony generally would be benefited as well; and, putting the benefit they would receive down at one-third, he thought they might very fairly ask the Mitchell district to contribute the other two-thirds. It would be a very small sum; taking £3,000 from the £9,000, it would leave £6,000 of the deficiency in interest to come from the Mitchell district. From the published rent lists in the *Government Gazette* he found that at present the annual rental received from that district was £18,000. Much had been said about doubling the rents of the pastoral

lessees, and the Minister for Works said they might double them if they gave a better tenure and railway privileges; but he (Mr. Paterson) said, let them deal with the railway privileges first and the question of tenure afterwards, because they should act with precaution. They should take the same precaution as if they were discounting a bill of someone whose ultimate ability to pay they were not quite certain about. In the present instance, they were about discounting this Loan Bill of the Government, and he held that they should take the same precaution, and way an assurance that, if after the railway was made there should be a deficiency of interest, it should be part of the scheme that portion of the deficiency, to the extent of two-thirds, should be obtained from the Mitchell district in respect of that line. Instead of asking double rent, all they should require was that the whole district should pay its share of the deficiency of interest, which was not too much to ask—that Ministers should give them an assurance that when these lines were completed any deficiency of interest accruing would be stated, and that they would assent and assist the House to pass a measure to enable the country to receive from the rents of that territory one-third more than they were at present receiving. He was not one of those who was faint-hearted about trunk lines. The Minister for Works, the other evening, showed clearly that trunk lines could be constructed at a very low cost. The principal saving arose from the cheapness of steel rails and other material that had to be imported; and he wished to point out, to hon. members who were doubtful upon this point, the benefit that would arise from a carefully-prepared and well-defined railway scheme at the present time. It was this—a few years ago permanent-way imported cost from £1,300 to £1,500 per mile, and the Minister for Works stated that it only now cost £675 per mile; so that if they availed themselves of the market at present, they would be making railways at the rate they were two years ago, and the saving, as far as permanent-way was concerned, would be equal to the enjoyment of their cost free of interest for five years. The interest on £3,000 for five years was £675, the amount at which the Minister for Works said permanent-way could now be imported for. This was the reason why they should now consider the desirability of supporting a sound and well-conceived measure for railway construction. Very much had been made of the estimated land revenue, and he should like to understand whether hon. members, when using this term, meant the rents from pastoral tenants or the proceeds of sales of Crown lands? It was very apt to mislead hon. members if there was not

some distinction made, but, taking land revenue as used by hon. gentlemen opposite to mean both sales of land and pastoral rents, they based their calculations on the land revenue received during the past five years, and expected to receive as much and more. But he was sorry to say that there was everything to discourage the belief that they would receive any such revenue. One of the principal reasons why this result might be expected was the very many abnormal purchases of land that had been made during the past five years by pastoral lessees. They were in a most flourishing state—both cattle, men, and sheep, were in a very much better position than they are at present; but every squatter he spoke with now on the matter, and every banker he spoke with on the point, affirmed that the squatters would do well in future to avoid the purchase of land. He believed there would be a considerable diminution in the receipts from the sale of pre-emptives to that section of the community; and there was no prospect of the pastoral interest jumping back into the position it held five years ago—at any rate, for the next two or three years, although he should be glad to see it do so. But there was another reason why the land sales revenue was likely to be stationary—namely, that if the Divisional Boards Bill was passed it would, at the present juncture dishearten many settlers in various parts of the colony—in fact, it had already done so. Every man who was about to take up a selection was now aware that the moment he took it up and it became of the nature of a freehold, he would be taxed for making roads, bridges, and what-not. That would act as a deterrent to selectors. At any rate, there were other ways in which he could indicate that there were no grounds for believing that the land revenue of the colony from sales and selections was likely to be increased; on the contrary, he believed it would be a good thing for the country if they could hold that revenue at its average for the last five years. A great deal had been said about the large extent of available country in the two Gregories and in the Mitchell districts; but he had gone over maps of the whole of them, and there were not four inches of blank paper in the lot, therefore there was no country to be taken up excepting runs that might be under forfeiture. The country was receiving now the maximum rental that it could possibly receive until the present leases expired. He was aware that under the leases there was an increase of rent from time to time, but of that he was not speaking, as they were entitled to that whether there was a railway or not. He contended that seven-eighths, if not nineteen-twentieths, of the whole country was

marked as “taken up” on the maps at the Land Office—that was, in the Gregories North and South, and in the Mitchell; so that there would not be, from the three sources he had mentioned, for the next three or four years, the increase expected by the Government during the period when they would be expending this loan. It had been said that the squatters would not receive any benefit from the railway; but he could indicate the way in which they would—they would enjoy the means of transit for the conveyance of their wool, &c., to the coast, and for their stores from it. They would have a better supply of labour; cheaper and more certain carriage; and a saving of interest on their money by their produce being rapidly conveyed to the coast. As a summary of the immediate benefit that would accrue to the squatters, he might mention that only a short time ago he saw a paragraph in a newspaper, in which it was stated that the people at Blackall had agreed to pay 25 per cent. more to get their goods conveyed thither in five weeks. Now if the people there would pay 25 per cent. more to get their goods out in five weeks, should the squatters not pay quite as much to get their goods out in twenty-five hours instead of months? But instead of asking them to pay extra carriage, they would only be asked to pay about one-third of what they paid at present—and even to that they demurred. Telegraph extension was a feature in the Loan Estimates, and he thought they should stay their hands in that direction. He believed he was correct in saying that the western lines did not pay anything like interest on their cost of construction, and therefore they ought to ask Ministers not to include telegraphic extension westward in their Loan Estimate. The Minister for Works spoke the other night of grass having paid the interest on the whole of the loan of the colony since Separation and leaving a balance of £280,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What I said was the interest on the money borrowed for railway construction.

Mr. PATERSON said he took down the hon. gentleman's words at the time, but he would take *Hansard* as a very fair representation of what the hon. gentleman said. The hon. gentleman was then reported to have said

“I say it is the grass of the colony that pays the interest upon railway making.”

He (Mr. Paterson) had only referred to the whole of the debt of the colony in respect to railways, as he had been talking about railways all the time. At any rate, the hon. gentleman said that the pastoral rents had not only paid the whole of the interest since Separation, but they would actually go £280,000 beyond that. The hon. gentle-

man had not shown that, nor had the Ministers shown any scheme or proposal under which they expected to extract from the grass of the colony a sufficient sum to cover the interest that might be necessary when these proposed lines were completed. His contention was, that they wanted the grass of those districts to pay for any deficiency of interest on the working of the contemplated lines; but no suggestion of the kind had been made. The hon. gentleman had spoken in flowery terms of the great benefits the people of Queensland had received from pastoral rents, but he said nothing about the benefits the squatters had received in return—nothing of the tons of newspapers carried from Brisbane into the interior, and landed at the squatter's cottages free of cost;—even the *Queenslander* was delivered to the farthest end of the territory without a farthing expense to the squatter. Taking the whole of the western territory, over the Main Range, crediting the whole of the rents received ever since Separation, and debiting the squatters with police protection, cost of the mail routes, dispensation of justice, police magistrates, and deficiency of interest on telegraphic construction from the time it first passed the Range into that sparsely-peopled territory, and only indicating a few of the benefits received by the squatter at the cost of the State, he guaranteed the outcome of it would be that there would be very little of the pastoral rents to go to the credit of the country. One could twist and turn figures to prove anything, but he had indicated on this point sufficient to show that the argument about the pastoral rents having been such a boon to the country was a fallacious one and apt to mislead. One of the leading features of the speeches of Ministers was that they did not defend the branch lines or give requisite information respecting them. The Colonial Secretary never used the words "branch lines" at all, and the Treasurer himself said very little about them; the Minister for Works referred to them in a somewhat hopeless fashion; columns of *Hansard* were devoted to the advocacy of the soundness of the policy of the extension of trunk lines, but there were few members who were not of the same opinion as the Ministry, on the general question that the country ought to be opened up by trunk lines. It was admitted on both sides there was little difficulty in the works specified. Branch lines were in the policy of the Government that ought not to be there, and branch lines were not there that should be there. The fundamental difference between the two sides of the House was as to the soundness of the financial policy—to use the words of the Postmaster-General. They on their side would

not proceed until the fullest details were given to enable members to judge of the merits of each line, otherwise they would be asked to take a leap in the dark. The great bulk of the population were represented by the members on the Opposition side, who were there to protect the interests of the population in the matter of taxation. He was as anxious as any member to see a Loan Bill passed—in twenty-four hours if necessary, and he hoped members on either side would do him the credit of believing that in what he had said he was actuated by no special partisanship; he had spoken as a Queenslander. Very much depended upon the public works policy of any Government. The essential features of every public works policy should be the extension of railways, coupled with a careful scheme of immigration, and if the two were considered together at the present time it would ultimately place this colony in the first rank of the group. They had been told outside the House, recently, that the extension of certain lines depended upon the side of the House upon which the representatives of the districts happened to sit. He, however, gave the present Government credit for being in earnest in their railway policy, though he did not think their heart and soul were in all the branch lines, and one or two of the trunk lines had but a watery support. This, perhaps, was not surprising. He might mention that the Ministerial party were not so liberal to his constituents as they were many years ago. Here they had a Premier who had a special knowledge of railway construction, and yet he gave the district he (Mr. Paterson) represented £90,000 less than the Colonial Secretary did when he was Premier. So far as the Liberal and Conservative parties went, the Central districts showed pretty well the same with both. As to mileage, the Palmer Administration gave 110 miles of railway towards the Comet, and the Liberal Administration ninety miles; but the cost of the ninety miles was £823,623, or nearly double that of the 110 miles. The total amount granted for railway construction in the Central districts was £1,303,678, out of which the Palmer Administration gave £480,000 and the Liberal £823,623; so that, so far as pounds went, the Central district had benefited more by the Liberal than by the Conservative party, and now that the Conservatives had come into power labelled "Liberal," they were treating the Central districts more scurvily than they were treated many years ago. Nothing had been said by Ministers upon which a fair and sound conclusion could be arrived as to where the deficiency was to come from. He had shown that land sales were likely to decrease instead of increase; that as far as the colony and its interests were concerned, the Divisional Boards Bill,

the tightness of the money market, and other causes, were likely to lead to a diminution of the land revenue. Those facts could not be contested, and they should therefore have further and fuller information of the intentions of the Government in the event of their prognostications as to the land revenue not being realised. He was not inclined to regard the debate as of so much importance as some people inside and outside the House were disposed to attach to it. It appeared to him to be more in the nature of a conciliatory remonstrance than anything else. There had been a good deal of financial juggling, but they had been unable to find the pea. However highly that might be gilded, he should follow the course indicated by his remarks, still hoping members of the Ministry would give them a little more information before going to division. All the speeches of hon. members of the Government had been of an ultra-pastoral character. Trunk lines were defended by them, but very little was said about branch lines; and, though he had no difficulty in digesting trunk lines, he was unable to give the Ministry his support. He should be guided by what was for the good of the colony.

Mr. J. M. THOMPSON said that, standing now in the position of an independent member, he recognised in the present debate an old friend—a premature attempt on the part of the Opposition to carry something against the Government. Not having been behind the scenes of either party he did not intend to say much of the party aspect of the affair, but it struck him as rather remarkable that when these railways which had been forced on the House in a lump were carried to their legitimate conclusion—when the high-handed policy of the other side was carried out, it should meet with objection from them. He could understand it if these six lines of railway were the outcome of the policy of his side of the House. Did not the records of the House show that they were forced on the country in the most high-handed manner? They were made to swallow the lot. When the hon. member for Maryborough chose to initiate a policy of that sort he ought also to have contemplated the ultimate result. If they began a railway into the wilderness they must carry it on until it paid, and if they had not provided sufficient money they must borrow what was required. It was therefore rather late to inquire how they were going to provide the interest on the money;—they should have thought of that when they gave the railways. But there was a very simple answer. The rate of increase of both population and property was so great that they could always overtake the interest on a loan of this kind. Ever since he had been in the House, the question of how to provide the interest

had been asked and objections raised. They paid their interest out of the increased prosperity of the colony. He was thoroughly tired of hearing the same thing, first from one side of the House and then from the other. All the objections urged from the Opposition side now were urged from the other side on a previous occasion; but there was this excuse then, that the whole of the six railways were forced upon the House in a lump. As far as the party aspect of the affair was concerned, the Government ought to have a little further trial. He urged this in the interests of the Opposition, because the Government were doing all the unpopular work. All this alarm about the depression of the colony, and so on, would pass away; its resources were the same as ever. The Opposition could then come in, fill up all the vacancies, increase all the salaries, and the enhanced prosperity of the colony would be attributed to them. Therefore, it was unwise on their part to do anything to embarrass the Government, so long as they were doing all the unpopular work. There was one thing that commended itself to him in this scheme of the Government, and that was their policy of branch lines of railway. From the last Government they had any amount of promises of branch lines. The Fassifern line was long ago dangled before the eyes of that constituency, and for a long time successfully; and to keep it dangling, no fewer than three surveys of it were made. It was a capital thing to promise; but they never had an amount for the Fassifern and Mount Esk railways on the Estimates. Promises only satisfied for a time; they were only unsubstantial food at best, but they staved off appetite for a while. The time had come now for something substantial. The Government were making an effort towards performance, and had put the several amounts on the Estimates for the first time. The sums were small. £2,500 a-mile was not, perhaps, sufficient for a high-speed railway; but they did not want high-speed railways, but would be quite content with sure and certain communication. Let it be understood—although he had no right to put it in so dictatorial a way—that those lines were to be made, and that the responsibility of their being made for the money rested with the Government. The Government would not pledge its credit to make the lines for a certain sum per mile unless they had reliable data to go upon. That the lines would pay he had not the slightest doubt. They might not pay in the shape of interest on cost of construction, but they would pay in increased facilities of communication, in the enhanced value of land, in increased facilities for getting produce to market, and in the development of the mineral resources of the country. Along with his hon. colleague (Mr. Mac-

farlane), he regretted that there was nothing in the scheme of the Government for bringing the Southern and Western Railway to deep-water. He was sorry for that, because such a branch line would greatly facilitate the shipping of minerals, and especially of coal, thereby putting the colony in that respect on more equal terms with New South Wales, which only possessed one coal—the Newcastle—as good. The hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) might have stated one fact in even stronger terms, for the Newcastle coal to which he referred was still in a corner of the Gas Company's shed at Ipswich, having been found inferior for their purpose to the Ipswich coal. There was coal at Ipswich which, if it got into the market, would find a market in any part of the world, and he was a little surprised, therefore, that the Government had done nothing to facilitate its export. It might be said that this sort of thing should be done by private enterprise, but capital in this colony was limited, and industries required some little fostering at the outset. If they were as rich as the capitalists of New South Wales, they could afford to pay £20,000 or £30,000 for a tramway to deep-water, but unfortunately they were not. Assistance in this direction was therefore quite legitimate, and the public would be justified in joining in an experiment which might be for the good of the whole colony, by establishing an industry which largely employed labour, which brought actual money into the colony, and which was unobjectionable in every way. He would suggest to the Government a means by which that object could be obtained under their present scheme. One of the surveys for the Sandgate line would pass along the river near Bulimba, and it would be an easy thing to communicate with the river so as to enable them to ship their coal. Whether the line went to South Brisbane or to Bulimba was nothing to the producing interests; all they wanted was to have the thing done. During the whole of the time those extraordinary shuffles were taking place in the late Administration to which reference had been made to-night, this question was continuously forced upon the attention of the Government far more than it had on this. There were inquiries and commissions—the most artistic commission ever got up by any Government—a commission so constituted that it was impossible for the members composing it to agree. The consequence was, a negative report which justified the Government in doing nothing; and they did nothing. He hoped the Government would consider his idea of taking the river on their way to Sandgate, and thus satisfy both the promises made by the late Government—branch railways and communication with deep-water. The Ipswich coal, with one

exception, required very tender handling, and would be greatly enhanced in value if it could be shipped without being broken up. It did not matter much which way he voted to-night, because he could see very well it was only a sham-fight. He should, however, vote on the side which had given them a part of the promises of the last Government, in the confident hope that the rest, also, would be given in due time.

Mr. HENDREN said he was sorry to hear the hon. member (Mr. Thompson), who had been absent from the colony and neglecting his Parliamentary duties, assert that this was a sham-fight—more especially as that hon. member had been requested by his constituents either to resign his seat or attend in his place in the House. But as that absence was, he believed, caused by circumstances over which the hon. member had no control, he would not upbraid him for it. What he (Mr. Hendren) wished to say was, that the best line to deep-water was from Oxley to South Brisbane, and that line should be made if they wished to enrich West Moreton, and not make it a mere pocket borough for North Brisbane. Several surveys had already been made for that line, and he recommended it to the attention of hon. members. He was speaking for the general good of the country, and he considered it would be a rascally shame to extend the line from the present terminus through the city. The distance to South Brisbane would be only about seven miles and there were no engineering difficulties in the way. The whole country was one coal-bed, and it was necessary that some line should be made to accommodate the coal trade. Mr. Gregory had shown that it was injurious to trade to ship coal from the wharves where general commerce was carried on. He (Mr. Hendren) was in favour of a line from South Brisbane to Oxley. On the north side there was no room, as all the land was occupied by men who wanted to make a fortune, and who had formed a land ring there. He had no interest in the export of wool, tallow, or other western produce, and he was only interested in the country as a whole, and particularly in the coal-producing portion of it. The district he represented had produced nearly all the coal that had been exported from the colony. He did not believe that anything he might say on the main question would have any influence whatever, so he would only congratulate the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Thompson) on his re-appearance in the House. There was not a particle of bad feeling between him and hon. members on the Ministerial side; and he believed that on a division the hon. member (Mr. Thompson) would be found voting for his district.

Mr. ARCHER said he should not trouble the House, as some hon. members had

done, with many quotations from *Hansard*. That was a weapon, as far as he could see, that cut both ways, and he did not think it was desirable to rake up what had been said years before. The hon. member (Mr. Bailey), who quoted nearly all his speech from *Hansard*, forgot that only a short time before he began a speech and altered his opinion before he got to the end of it. The hon. member who changed his opinions, not in the course of years, but in five minutes, had no need to rake up old speeches to account for the actions of the day. The hon. gentlemen who first spoke from the Opposition side of the House did not treat the question quite fairly when they made a great cry about the enormous amount of money proposed to be borrowed, and the length to which the Government were going. They did not draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Government were not going nearly so far as the House had again and again gone before. They all started on the false assumption that the three millions was to be borrowed in order to be spent in one year; otherwise, he did not know what the speeches meant. The leader of the Opposition said that all the cry was "give us money," as if the request was for a very much larger amount than he had ever been instrumental in getting while he was a member of a Government. The fact was, that the sum proposed was much smaller than the amount the colony had been in the habit of borrowing. Three millions divided into three years gave one million a year; and the Minister for Works had read the other day that in 1875 the colony borrowed £1,695,300; in 1876, £740,700; and in 1877, £1,322,000—making in the three years a total of £3,758,000, or an average of about £1,253,000 a year. Therefore, the Government were now proposing to borrow a quarter of a million a year less than the previous Government borrowed during those three years. And yet the cry was that the Government were proposing to borrow excessive sums and to rush the colony into a frightfully extensive system of public works. He insisted that such was not a fair way to put the question. Again, the hon. member for Enoggera said that in 1869 so little money had been borrowed that the interest on it was not a great deal more than half of the income derived from Customs and Excise. He might have gone a little further, back to the time when there was no interest to pay at all upon borrowed money. But the sum now proposed to be borrowed would not by any means be a greater addition than the sums which he had been instrumental in borrowing. No doubt, the hon. gentleman had much easier times; when he was Treasurer the yearly increase of revenue to a great extent covered the

interest on the sums borrowed. The hon. gentleman should remember, also, that there was a hope that the colony would not be for a great length of time in the depressed state it was now. He had only to steer the ship of the State, as an hon. member (Mr. Douglas) had called it, at a time when there were no great difficulties in the way. Ministers were now brought face to face with the fact that if the public works of the colony were suddenly stopped there would be distress in the country a great deal worse than anything likely to result from the payment of interest. What hon. members had said of the enormous extravagance of the Government applied much more fairly to the former Government. When the hon. member (Mr. Douglas), in his poetical image of the ship in full sail, blamed the Government for carrying all sail at a time when to weather a storm they ought to take in reefs and manage the ship carefully, he had not taken the trouble to study the figures laid before the House, and must have been under the impression that the proposed loan was greater than what he had been in the habit of borrowing, instead of being at the rate of a quarter of a million a year less. There need not be such fear, because it was perfectly well known that the sum would not be borrowed at one time, but be scattered over the period stated. He wished to say, briefly and distinctly, why he was able to support the Loan Estimates. Every hon. member was probably best acquainted with the resources of his own district. He (Mr. Archer) was thoroughly satisfied with the resources of his district, and, so far from there being a question as to where the interest was to come from for the construction of the Central Railway, he believed the line would help the construction of other lines. The representatives of the Southern part of the colony did not appear to have the same confidence in their districts. They appeared to be afraid that the branch lines and the extension of the Southern and Western Railway would not pay; but they would have this satisfaction, at any rate, that the lines would not be "bunched," and they would be able to oppose them as they came forward one by one. As for the Central line, he felt perfectly confident it would not add one penny to the general indebtedness, or at all events it would pay in a few years, after the earnings were taken into account. The Southern lines, therefore, stood on a different footing. There were a great many gentlemen who were satisfied that branch lines would not pay, but the branch railways now proposed differed materially from the lines the late Government introduced. The railways the Postmaster-General did not believe in were short lines going nowhere, such as the Bundaberg and Gympie lines. These were what were

called short and insignificant lines, which ought, perhaps, never to have been undertaken, and these were the lines which the Postmaster-General opposed. The branches now proposed had the advantage that they were connected with main lines and would act as feeders to them, and that every bit of produce or fare they carried would actually add to the income of the main lines, and they therefore could not be put in the same category as the Gympie and Bundaberg lines. He would simply notice that the Northern line, which had been spoken of by the hon. member (Mr. Paterson) as one of the short lines to which the Postmaster-General objected, would really become a trunk line, the same as the Central. If the people who had got what they wanted, or were getting what they wanted, objected to the Government undertaking this railway, they should be disappointing the Northern people; it was known they were promised this line by the late Government, and the present Ministry would therefore be breaking faith if they did not carry it out. As to the talk about who benefited by the construction of these railways, it was mere nonsense to say that the squatters of the West would not benefit. Whoever got cheaper and more certain carriage benefited; but, if they were to look at the interest with which the towns contended for the railways, they benefited as much as any part of the country. Why was there a class in the South advocating that the Roma Railway should go North—if it was not because it was known that Brisbane would be benefited and corner allotments would be made more valuable? In Rockhampton there was the same feeling, but there was this difference—they had opened a legitimate trade to the West by their own enterprise and carried on the traffic by means of drays. They were anxious for the extension of the Central railway, because they feared that the Southern line would tap their district, and they were justified in their wish. No one who had watched the energy with which they had fought for the western trade would grudge them their desire to retain it. Seeing the confidence that he had in the trunk lines ultimately becoming payable, and referring especially to the Central one, he had not the slightest doubt in supporting the Government; and, if he saw the Opposition on the other side so decidedly opposed to the Southern lines being carried out, perhaps he would give them his assistance. Probably, however much they might object at present to the loan now proposed, they would prefer and be ready to increase the amount so that their districts might get a larger share, rather than obstruct the Government in getting the loan. He was rather disappointed at the inconclusive way in which the hon. member (Mr. Paterson)

broke off his speech. He believed as he (Mr. Archer) did—that the Central line, at all events, would pay well and be an assistance, and not a drain upon the country; and he had therefore hoped that the hon. member would say he would not vote for the motion of the leader of the Opposition, as by supporting it he would actually object to the scheme of the Government. He (Mr. Archer) felt that these main trunk lines were already and were more and more becoming the means by which their towns grew and increased in wealth and trade, and that, therefore, they must be carried out. The present might not be the most fortunate time to carry them out. They, of course, deplored that the normal increase of revenue did not meet the expenditure, and if they believed it were to continue they should have to go on much slower; but Queensland had seen quite as bad times before, and had recovered from them. He therefore thought that they could safely entrust the Government with the expenditure of the proposed loan to open out the traffic of the country. No one, however timid he might be as to the present, would fail to see that the proposed works were necessary; but, at the same time, he was far from wishing to carry things with a fast hand. If the Ministry and the House would see that it was desirable gradually to decrease public works, to borrow year by year a slightly lower amount, he believed they would be doing a wise thing. They saw what distress would be created if the expenditure of public money were to cease. Let both sides, therefore, make up their minds to a certain scheme by which the expenditure of public money should be lessened, so that in some time of prosperity they should be able to stop these expensive public works altogether without feeling it. At present, however, such a thing could not be done, and if the opponents of the Government succeeded in bringing it about, they would be the worst friends of the country.

Mr. McLEAN: From the speeches made on this question by the Ministry and their followers, it is very evident that the Government and those who support them consider that they have a great mission to perform, which is to extend three main lines into the interior. That is the mission of the Government, and that is why the squatters are determined to support them. In all the speeches that have been made from the other side we have had vividly recalled to our mind the banquet scene in Macbeth. In that scene there is always a Banquo appearing, and here we have always had the ghost of the late Government appearing. The late Government it is said, have involved the country in this and that great expenditure; they have "bunched" six lines of railway together, and forced them upon the House. Well, if the late Govern-

ment did force them upon the House, they also came down with plans, specifications, and books of reference, and they laid them upon the table before they ever asked the House to vote a single fraction for the purpose of constructing the railways. Do we find this to be the case now? On the contrary, there is not a single survey effected of the proposed lines; not one Minister has told us that one survey has been made for any portion of the proposed trunk or branch lines. We know perfectly well that in a large majority of cases there have been actually no surveys made, and that the Government have no more idea of the character of the country over which the lines will have to pass than they have of the nature of the country in the moon. There is a great difference between the respective policies of the late Government and the present. I have already pointed out one. When the late Government came to the House with plans and books of reference, they were in a position to give at least some faint idea of how much the work was to cost; but the present Government come down, and tell us they are prepared to carry out 390 miles of railway at £3,000 per mile, without the slightest evidence to show that the work can be done for that amount, or any information whatever on the subject. There is no ground whatever for such assumption. The Government simply express their belief that it can be done; but I would ask, is the House justified in involving the country in this amount of additional taxation on the simple statement that Ministers believe that certain railways can be made for a certain sum of money? I am not one of those who place implicit faith in the present Government or any Government; and I say we are not justified in involving the colony in additional taxation simply upon such a statement. If the Government had come down with plans and books of reference, and calculations of their engineers, and then said they believed the lines could be carried out for a certain sum, there might be some ground for believing them; but they have not produced anything of the kind, or anything further than their belief that it can be done. We have, however, the further statement that unless the work can be done as the Government think it can be, they would not be justified in going on with the work. Another point made by the other side of the House with regard to the borrowing of this money is, that it is better to go to the London money-market and say, "We want three millions of money, but we do not want it all at once," than to ask for it in dribblets; but do the Government really think that the capitalists of England are not just as well aware as we are here that we have other works to carry out as well as those we have in hand at the present

time? I cannot see the slightest difference between the manner in which the late Government went into the money-market and asked for loans to carry on public works, and the manner in which the present Government intend doing the same thing. The capitalists of England are well aware that further loans will be required by this colony. There is one remark made by the Colonial Secretary with reference to the vote for immigration to which I wish to refer. I do not call attention to this for the purpose of bringing up the railway workshops again, but to show that while accusations were hurled against the late Government of being a squeezable Government, no sooner did the present Government meet the House than they were squeezed into a line of action that they had no intention whatever of carrying out until they were compelled to do so by this side of the House. When the Government were charged with driving people out of the colony, the Colonial Secretary said—

"I deny the fact that our act in dismissing some of the artisans from the Ipswich railway shops had a tendency to drive people out of the colony, for although we deemed it our duty to lessen the number of people who were and even now are only half employed in those workshops, we found that by giving certain contracts in the colony we were furnishing employment to mechanics of the same description."

But how came it that this work was given to the colony? It was distinctly given to the mother-country by the present Government until challenged by the Opposition, and then to appease to a certain extent the excitement caused by the dismissals from the Ipswich workshops, they turned about, and, instead of sending the work home to be carried out, it was handed to a Brisbane firm. That was one of the first public acts of the present Government, and it was squeezed out of them by the present Opposition. With reference to the cost of these lines, I have every confidence in the Premier as an engineer, and if that gentleman knew the country and had the plans before him and then told us from what he knew of the country, and from the calculations he had made, he believed these lines would be carried out for £3,000 a mile, I do not think any member of the House would have doubted it; but I and other hon. members have no right—nor do I suppose the hon. gentleman would ask us—to accept it as mere guess-work, and we are not prepared blindly to vote the sum on the mere assumption that the Government believe it can be done. Again, I ask hon. members is it right for us to force this additional 390 miles of railway upon the people of the far West against their will? We were told distinctly by the hon. member for Normanby (Mr. Stevenson) and by the Premier, that if the settlers out west

had their way they would rather these railways were not built, and I say, we have no right to make these people have railways whether they want them or not. The hon. member for Blackall (Mr. Archer) has told us that he has every confidence that the Central line will pay, and I do not doubt that it will, but I think it will be a very long time before it does pay. It must be in the knowledge of hon. members that some of these western extensions have to travel over 100 miles of country—at least the Central line has—from which no traffic whatever will be derived, so that the only additional revenue from that line will be from the 30 miles beyond the 100. I have often heard it said that the longer we make our lines the better they will pay; but I cannot understand that unless you take into consideration one important factor, and that is that you must have population to create traffic before they will pay. That is why I believe the branch lines the Government propose to carry out will pay better than the trunk line; because where the branch lines will be made there are people settled, and there is traffic ready to go upon the lines as soon as they are constructed. But we have no population out in the far West, although some hon. members are of opinion that when these railways are made out there a great deal of settlement will take place. But we have extensive settlement in the districts where the branch lines are proposed, and therefore I think those lines will pay a far larger percentage than the main lines. The Minister for Works told us last Wednesday, with reference to this 390 miles of railway, that he was prepared to prove we should not require additional taxation for the extension of the lines westward, though he could not say as much for the branch lines. The hon. gentleman said that the poor man would not be put to a penny additional taxation. I can prove to the House that the policy of the Government has already increased the taxation of the poor man, and that the present action of the Government is imposing additional burdens upon the settlers. We have a return upon the table showing nearly £14,000 of lapsed votes in connection with our roads and bridges; and will the hon. gentleman tell me that if our roads are not in a good state of repair it is not an additional taxation, and that in its most insidious form? When speaking of the Divisional Boards Bill some time ago, I stated that the object of that Bill was to enable the Government to nurse the general resources of the colony, to pay the interest required for the carrying out of these main trunk lines to the West. What I said then, I repeat now. As to this £100,000 on the Loan Estimates in connection with the Divisional Boards Bill, I will refer to what the Colonial

Secretary said in objecting to a remark made by my hon. friend (Mr. Dickson). The hon. member said that my hon. friend ought not to say that the £100,000 was intended as a bribe, considering that the Premier announced on the second reading of the Divisional Boards Bill that it was impossible the shire councils could come into existence unless help was given them during the first year. I was struck with the remark at the time, and have made it my business to read carefully through the Treasurer's speech in delivering his Financial Statement, and there is not a single word about his considering the Divisional Boards Bill by a gift from the Government. It was evidently an afterthought. When the petitions were coming into the House against the passing of the Bill, then the Treasurer, on second thoughts, concluded it would be well to start these divisional boards into existence by giving them £100,000. The statement was never made in the Financial Statement, but came in as an afterthought to gild the pill of the Divisional Boards Bill. The Colonial Treasurer saw clearly that unless there was something sweet put round this taxation, as mothers put jelly around nauseous medicines they give to their children, the settled districts would not swallow it. I have always been a strong advocate of branch lines, but there is one branch line I do not observe in this list, and I know that at least one member of the present Government was pledged to it. I refer to the Colonial Secretary, who distinctly stated, and promised to the people of the Logan, when it was necessary to hold out another bribe, not only that they should have a railway, but a bridge over the Logan, at Loganholme. The same Government gave a distinct pledge through their Attorney-General that they would give an additional member to Fortitude Valley; but it appears that promises are made by this Government to be broken unless there is the great consideration hanging at the end of it—"If you return our man, you will get such and such; if not, you will be punished for it." The Minister for Works said a good deal, while criticising my hon. friend, Mr. Douglas, about log-rolling; but if these harbours and rivers are not specimens of log-rolling I do not know what is, and the Minister for Works must confess it. I find here the item of £10,000 for the Logan River. I am sorry the Colonial Treasurer is not in his place, because I would like to know what he is going to do with it. I am told he has arranged to put it upon the Loan Estimates to oblige the hon. member for Bulimba, and, if that is so, a charge of log-rolling can most distinctly be made out. Then there is £10,000 for the Endeavour River. The hon. member for Cook is here, and he can contradict me if I am wrong, but I was told by a resident of Cooktown

that there is no necessity whatever for this £10,000 being spent, because the largest steamers that trade to the North can come in to the wharf at Cooktown and discharge and take in cargo without the slightest impediment. I have always been an advocate for something being done for the goldfields, but I cannot for the life of me see why the goldfields should have been specially picked out by the Government for a favour in the form of having £20,000 additional put down for them on these Loan Estimates. Is it the intention of the Government not to bring the goldfields within the operation of the Divisional Boards Bill? It looks like it, because if that Bill is to be brought into operation on the goldfields as well as elsewhere, why are not they to have their share of the £100,000 which is put down? It seems as if there is to be an extra share for the goldfields, and, however much the hon. Minister for Works may have been charged by hon. members on this side with not looking after the interests of the miners, after this we may exonerate him from any such charge. It is true this £20,000 is to be spent on main roads to the goldfields, but I do not see why the goldfields should be benefited at the expense of the whole colony, if they are not to be brought under the operation of the Divisional Boards Bill. I was rather amused at the manner of the Premier and the Minister for Works when meeting the question of how the interest was to be paid on this loan. It is well known that the late Government provided a scheme by which the interest on all loans was to be met, but the Premier, in telling the House how this interest was to be paid, scorned the idea of adopting the plan proposed by the late Government, and said to us, "You had a limited area from which to receive interest on your loan, but"—and here the hon. gentleman gave a triumphant wave of his hand—"I have the whole colony." Like Robinson Crusoe, the hon. gentleman was monarch of all he surveyed, and said, with a great flourish, "I have the whole colony." I, as a representative of a settled district, distinctly object to such a system being pursued by any Government. The settled districts have been already taxed for the construction of these railways, and yet they are to be taxed doubly to pay for a railway to the very district which has paid least to the revenue, for reasons best known to the hon. gentleman himself who brought down this Loan Estimate. I have no intention of keeping the House much longer, as I think it is time we came to a division. I hope we shall come to a division. I hope that the leader of the Opposition will call for a division in order to show the country that however great were the protestations of the other side of the House during the elections that there were not two parties in the country, it will be conclusively demon-

strated by this division that there are still two parties, and that we are determined to keep that line as well defined as we possibly can. The Government come and ask for £1,150,000 for three trunk lines solely for the benefit of one class of the community, but when the claims of the class which has to a great extent made the colony what it is, a class which has been struggling on for years—when its claims are brought forward, a fifth of that amount only is to be given to them for branch lines. I think, if a division is taken, it will prove to the country that there are at least two parties on that question. I was rather amused at hearing the hon. member for Gregory charge this side with obstruction. Who have been the obstructors during the present session? Certainly not hon. members on this side, for we have assisted the Government to pass their measures; or, rather, if we had not assisted them no measure they would have passed could ever have been of any use to the country. Instead, therefore, of deserving to be charged with obstruction, we have done all we could to assist the Government in passing their measures, which I am sorry are so few in number. I have no hesitation in making up my mind on this question—it has been made up long ago; but there is one thing I will do, which is this—that I will do all I can to assist in getting branch lines. I can see clearly from the speeches of hon. members opposite that they are quite willing for us to assist them in getting their trunk lines, and also are quite willing to assist us in not voting for the branch lines. I think it is quite time that the people in the settled districts should have railway facilities given to them, and I shall not assist to strike out one item in the Loan Estimates for branch lines. I am sorry the Government have not thought proper to include in their list a branch line from the Southern and Western Railway to deep-water, but they can do that gracefully yet, and I am confident they will receive the assistance of the House in so doing.

Mr. WALSH said he had been rather pleased at the desire expressed to go to a division that night. He had heard nothing during the present session but strictures on the policy of the Government, and over and over again it had been stated by hon. members opposite that the Government had no policy—in fact, every petty advantage had been taken to embarrass the Government in proceeding with their business, and, therefore, he considered it was a matter for general congratulation that they hoped to finish the discussion of the policy of the Government that evening, and thus allow them to go on with the business of the country. As to the policy of the Government, he was only able to see a slight difference in it from what it always was

and that was in the right direction, inasmuch as they had placed more money on the Estimates for branch railways than they advocated when in Opposition. That ought certainly to suit the Opposition, who used to be continually denouncing trunk lines and advocating branch lines. There was one thing in favour of trunk lines—namely, that they were made through Crown lands, whereas branch lines were all made through the property of private persons, who frequently agitated for them, not for the purpose of benefiting the country, but with the object of getting a good price for their lands. They desired to extort money from the Government of the day. In some particulars he did not altogether approve of the Loan Estimates; but he should, whether he supported or objected to anything, give his free opinion. There were some new departures which were not wise. The hon. member for the Logan had discovered for the first time some recognition of the importance of the goldfields, and the hon. member evidently did not think that a departure in the right direction, but rather that people should be taxed to eradicate Bathurst burr. Another hon. member (Mr. Kates) would like to support the Burr Bill if it could be worked without taxing the people. How could he expect to get rid of burr if the people who suffered from it did not tax themselves?

Mr. KATES explained that it was the public reserves which were infested through the neglect of the Government. The station-owners had cleared their stations.

Mr. WALSH said that did not alter the case, as the reserves were for the benefit of the people there, and they should bear any tax. He would have liked to hear some scheme from the leader of the Government by which any deficiency in the interest on borrowed money should be raised from the districts specially benefited by the loan expenditure. They would have ultimately to come to that. The leader of the Opposition had objected that there was no proposed increase of population, but if that hon. member prevented the carrying out of a progressive works policy he would have a direct means of decreasing the population. He viewed the Charters Towers line as one of the best the colony would have, and from his knowledge of the country and the district he could say it would be as remunerative as the Central line. If there was an objectionable trunk line it was the extension from Roma, which he had hoped to see a large inland town, but when the railway was taken north-westerly, as the people of Brisbane hoped it would be, it would get no more traffic than if the terminus were at Roma, and the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Macfarlane) could have known nothing of the surroundings when he advocated

that extension. Of the three lines it was the weakest. If it was extended north-westerly it would scarcely compete with the Central line; if extended to Thorgomindah, with a view to catching the New South Wales traffic, they must remember that the River Darling was flooded at least twice a year and sometimes all the year round, and with freight at £3 a ton to Adelaide from such places as Bourke, Brewarrina, and Walgett, it would most likely turn out that all stations on the border would send their produce that way. He doubted the expediency of extending the Roma line, and hoped it would not receive the sanction of the House. The objection that Government had not shown how they were going to raise the interest on borrowed capital had been sufficiently dealt with by the Premier and the Minister for Works, whose speeches he had read, but it was clear to him that, if the railways hitherto constructed at an average cost of £9,000 a mile could pay 2 or 3 per cent. on this outlay, those now to be constructed at about £3,000 a mile would pay much more. Another thing in favour of the trunk lines was that the whole of the inland country was level, and that they could not make a good road so cheaply as they could make a good railway. In reference to taxation, it appeared to him absurd that the squatter should not pay more rent for his run when he had derived benefit from increased railway accommodation. Would not the Parliament of the day, whoever they were—and it was nearly certain the party in power would be the Liberal Ministry—have the power to increase the land rents? Could they not pass an Act raising the rents?

Mr. GARRICK: No; they have their twenty-one years' leases.

Mr. WALSH took it the House could, in spite of what the hon. gentleman said; it appeared absurd if the House could not. With reference to the roads on the goldfields and the Divisional Boards Bill, the hon. member for the Logan forgot that the district of Cook had only been discovered five years, and that it stood in a very different position to the older parts of the colony where they had had macadamised roads for the last twenty-five years. There was not a single culvert on the road from Cooktown to Maytown that had cost 20s. of public money, and as the district had produced so much was it fair to ignore it? They wanted no money in that district for which they were not prepared to pay interest, and they had several resources from which to pay interest on any expenditure there. A reference had been made to the item for the improvement of the Endeavour Harbour; and in speaking of it the leader of the Opposition might have added that, in addition to the ships he had seen alongside, there

were many large steamers which could not come in, but which had to be lightened outside. When those improvements were made they would be able to go alongside. The hon. gentleman's opinion of the Endeavour Harbour had evidently been obtained from a gentleman who was mad on railways, and who could not see that there should be any expenditure for other purposes. He did object, however, to the way in which the money was to be borrowed for harbours and rivers. There ought to be harbour and river trusts, who should be enabled to borrow money, Government guaranteeing the interest. They were prepared for the two items referring to his district in the Loan Estimates to pay the interest themselves, and, to show the truth of what he said, he was willing to put a substantial deposit in the hands of the Treasurer if he would lease the wharves to him for a term of years. It was not fair that they should be deepening the Fitzroy or Brisbane rivers with funds derived from the Cooktown wharves. And he might say that Government had made a profit of £3,000 out of the jetties at Cooktown. The line to Sandgate might very advantageously be excluded. It was a wretched place, fit for nothing, and it would be better to construct a railway to carry coal to deep-water instead, as advocated by the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Thompson). It was not too late to make such an alteration. He hoped these Loan Estimates would be more productive than the past had been. He had come 1,100 miles to give his vote with the Government. As a business man he always judged by results. They had had a Liberal Ministry in power for five years, and every time they had been in power they had brought the colony to a state bordering on bankruptcy, while the other Ministry always left the Treasury in a sound and solvent position with the colony generally prosperous. He had been always opposed to the so-called Liberal party, and as he had been seventeen years in the colony, and had had opportunities of judging them, it was likely he always would be.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Ipswich), in explanation, said the hon. member had misquoted him in saying that he advocated a line west of Roma. What he did say was that in times past he had expressed approval of such an extension; but that the present was not the time for making it.

Mr. GARRICK: I intend to give, shortly, my reasons for voting for the amendment moved by the hon. member for North Brisbane. The first is that I do not think the Government are sincere in their railway proposals, and several circumstances have led me to this conclusion. In the Financial Statement, the Colonial Treasurer made no allusion whatever to any branch lines ex-

cept those on the Darling Downs. The proportion between branch lines and trunk lines has always been considered a matter of vital importance by residents in the settled districts, and there has consequently been a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed by the public, when they saw a sum of £1,500,000 proposed for main trunk lines, and only £300,000 for branch lines, or in a proportion of one-fifth. It was a difference in principle when the hon. gentleman cut down the amount for trunk lines from £1,500,000 to a little over £1,100,000, and increased the amount for branch lines to £400,000 over, bringing the latter up to more than a third of the sum proposed for the former. I believe the hon. gentleman did that partly to secure cohesion in his own party, and partly to reinstate his Government in the popular estimation of a large portion of the colony. It may also have been made in view of the probable contingency of an appeal to the country, knowing that if he had appealed to the country on his Financial Statement alone, he would not have occupied the Treasury benches again. Hints, coming from a quarter about which there could be no mistake, were long ago given that there would be an alteration. A very consistent supporter of the Government, some time before the Loan Estimates came down, said he did not approve of the Financial Statement, particularly of that portion of it which had reference to branch railways. That hon. member was not speaking for himself alone, for there are generally one or two who follow in his wake. We concluded, therefore, that that hon. member's statement was inspired, and that there was likely to be a change of front on the part of the Government in respect to branch railways. Such a change has actually taken place, and it has consisted, as we suspected, in an increase of the sums for branch railways and a decrease of those for the trunk lines. There is evidence in the Estimates themselves that the Government are not convinced of the necessity of a very large part of their railway policy. When the Colonial Treasurer introduced them he seemed to give almost stronger reasons against them than for them, and it might be inferred that he would not be astonished, nor would he regret, if a large part of the estimate were not agreed to. With reference to the Sandgate railway, the hon. gentleman said that if it could not be carried out for £4,000 a mile it ought not to be carried out at all, adding in almost the same breath that his engineer told him it could not be carried out for less than £6,000 a mile.

The PREMIER: What I said was that the engineer said a first-class line would cost £6,000 a mile.

Mr. GARRICK: On that statement, I ask whether it is probable the line can be made

for £4,000 a mile? The Colonial Treasurer, in replying to the speeches made during the debate on the Financial Statement, said the persons through whose land the lines ran should give it to the Government. In the estimate of £4,000 a mile for the Sandgate railway, no allowance is made either for rolling-stock or for land resumption. Under such circumstances, I ask whether the Government are sincere in their intention to make that line? On such a line it is impossible that owners of land can give their land for railway purposes. Owners of large areas may be willing to give a portion for such purposes, but on a line like the one proposed to Sandgate it might in many instances take nearly the whole of a man's property, and in all justice that could not be taken without giving him compensation for it. It is evident, therefore, that the Government have no intention of carrying out that line, and this is confirmed by the Premier's statement that the line should not be made unless it could be constructed for £4,000 a-mile, and adding in the same breath that it could not be constructed for that amount. That railway should not be purely a Sandgate railway. It might be made to tap the rich and thickly settled agricultural districts, second to none in the colony. It might be made to collect the traffic from the Bald Hills, the North and South Pine and Caboolture. Instead of this, it is put forward as a mere pleasure line, while there is no provision made on the Estimates for a branch line through the districts I have mentioned. Besides the Sandgate line, there are other proofs of insincerity on the part of the Government with reference to their railway policy, as pointed out by the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates). What do they mean by making the line from Warwick to Killarney—twenty miles, when the traffic cannot be obtained in that distance? The mileage put down has no reference whatever to any traffic which could be collected. There is both intrinsic and extrinsic evidence that the Government are not sincere in their railway policy. Another reason—I will repeat it once more—is, that there is no sufficient provision made for meeting the indebtedness which the Government propose. The Colonial Secretary said he was tired of hearing of this, but the reason why the question has been so repeatedly put is that it has never been satisfactorily answered. The Colonial Treasurer complained that he was asked to make this provision while such a thing was never exacted from his predecessor. On this the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) alluded to the debit balance of £180,000, and I said, "Hear, hear." The Colonial Secretary tried to intimate that we applauded the fact of there being a debit balance, but the hon. member knows very

well that the fact was simply mentioned to show the financial position of the present and previous Colonial Treasurers with reference to their providing interest for loans. The present Treasurer, in his financial statement, said "It is true that in 1874 taxation was heavier than it is at present, and that since then our loan expenditure has been more than doubled; but increased expenditure does not necessarily mean increased taxation." From 1874 to the present time there was not only always a credit balance, but there had been remission of taxation. There was, therefore, no necessity to make any special provision for the payment of interest when the ordinary revenue sufficed for it. There is now a debit balance of £180,000, and I ask whether that does not make it binding on the Colonial Treasurer to show us that he has made a provision to meet the interest on the proposed loan? The Treasurer stated that he expected to have a credit balance of £51,000 for next year; but hon. members will remember that the Colonial Secretary, when the Estimates were passing, said, in reference to several items, "I regret the sum is so large, and also that the provision will not be sufficient, so that we shall have to come down to the House for an increased provision." Considering that, and the improbability of the Treasurer getting the revenue he anticipated for this year, the House will be justified in not allowing the Government to effect a loan for three millions without making provision to meet the interest. The Treasurer said he expected a large increase in the revenue from land, and that he had all sources to look forward to. He intimated that the debit balance of £180,000 arose from the fact of proceeds of land sales being diverted from Consolidated Revenue to Railway Reserves Fund; but if he takes credit for every shilling received on account of land sales last year, including all that has gone in railway reserves, the debit balance will stand at £117,000. The hon. gentleman endeavoured to show that he would get nearly £40,000 more than last year from all sources of land revenue; but where is the foundation for such an estimate? The hon. member for Gregory has himself stated, with reference to pastoral rents, that there will be an abandonment of runs, and that the amount received on the 30th September next will not be so large as the amount received for the last year. So that in the estimation of one of his own supporters the Treasurer will not get so large an amount from that source as was received last year. Then the hon. gentleman said he would get £50,000 more from the Custom House. He anticipated a revival of trade, but he did not attempt to say upon what basis his anticipations rested. It is more likely, however, that

the Customs receipts, like those from land, will not come up to the receipts of last year. He also estimated an increase of £40,000 from the Southern and Western Railway; but is there any basis for that estimate? Not only is the expenditure likely to be increased, but the revenue is likely to decrease, and instead of a credit balance of £5,000 there is more likely to be a debit balance, as there was on the 30th June last. Those circumstances distinguish the position of the present Colonial Treasurer from that of other Treasurers for the past four or five years, and place upon him the necessity of showing, without doubt, how he will be able to get the interest for his intended loan. The members of the Government say that it is not intended to raise all the money at once, but it is sufficient for this side that the Government are asking for the power to do so; and if the power be given they will be invested with a comparative discretionary power as to when they will raise it. If they considered the market favourable at any time they might float the loan, and then come down to the House asking an indemnity and saying they were of opinion they were furthering the best interests of the colony. It has been said that the better plan will be to ask for a loan of three millions, and float part at a time. Would it not be better to go to the public creditor and say—for I believe it is best to state everything—"We find that our expenditure exceeded our revenue last year by about £180,000; we have certain works already sanctioned which need to be carried out, and a certain amount in hand which will last us to the end of this year. Until we see signs of better times we will be satisfied with asking for such an amount as, with what we have in hand, will enable us to carry on works already authorised, and will last till the end of the financial year 1881. If better times come we will come again to the money market." Such a statement would be much more appreciated than a mere speculation founded on the migration of sheep westward—it would be founded not on a mere speculation, but upon realised fact. The Treasurer eliminated all his non-productive works, and he said all he should want for interest was £56,000. He based that statement on the supposition that the railways at the present time were paying $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Figures can be made to do a great deal, but my idea is that the railways are giving no such return. Certain book balances in the Treasury make those railways appear to pay $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., but there are other official documents showing that they do not. The Auditor-General's statement says that £3,000,000 has been expended out of loan on the Southern and Western Railway.

The interest on that amount, seeing that some of the money was borrowed at more than 5 per cent., may be put down as £150,000. From the tables prepared in connection with the financial statement, it will be found that the returns from that line for the first ten months of the year were £50,694. Adding one-fifth for the remaining two months, though the returns are not likely to be quite so large proportionately, the amount for the year will be about £61,000. The returns, therefore, will be not $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., but about 2 per cent.—leaving £90,000 falling upon the general taxpayers of the country. With regard to the Central line, the cost of construction was about £1,100,000, the interest of which would be £55,000; and the returns for the ten months were £18,161, making with one-fifth added for the remaining two months something less than £22,000. So that that line will also only pay 2 per cent., and £33,000 will be left for the general taxpayers. It may be said that in those figures something is included for maintenance; but if in the keeping of the accounts amounts have been charged to loan which should have been charged to income, the figures given by the Minister for Works and the Treasurer are entirely inaccurate, and no reliance can be placed upon them. Has the Colonial Treasurer shown any way by which the interest on the proposed loan is to be met? From the principal sources to which he looked—the increase of land revenue and Customs—the interest cannot be derived. The Minister for Works, in his speech, made a most astonishing calculation, and appears to be in the position of a gentleman who proves too much. He proves that one extension, taking it as an extension only, will pay $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. He proves that the Southern and Western extension, as an extension simply, will pay $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and that the Central line will pay $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. gentleman is misquoting me, as he usually does. I stated that if our railways had been constructed for £3,000 per mile they would pay—the Southern and Western $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and the Central line $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

MR. GARRICK: Accepting these figures, which I do not dispute, I would merely observe that I was not disputing the cost of the construction of the lines, but I was saying that the contention of the Minister for Works is that if he can make these railways for £3,000 per mile as now proposed they will pay at the rate he mentioned. The hon. member has proved altogether too much. What has become, I ask, of the ancient miner? He has developed into a pure merino; no one sitting upon that side of the House has endeavoured to prove so much in favour of the squatters

as the Minister for Works. The member for Gregory was struck with amazement at the disinterestedness and single-mindedness of the hon. gentleman. He was delighted to find that an outsider had been converted; that one who had opposed them in the old time had spoken almost as one of the prophets; that they had got a new disciple, and he hoped shortly there would be others. After all, it does not astonish us that the Minister for Works should do this. Will anyone look down at the list of members on his side of the House, and see how the cohesion of the party is maintained. The Treasurer alters his scheme of branch railways to work round some of his followers, and now the Minister for Works advocates the interests of the pastoral lessees to do his part towards keeping together the twenty lessees, or agents, who sit behind and around the Ministry. I wonder at the innocence of the member for the Gregory, and, I repeat, part of the speech of the Minister for Works the other night, in advocacy of the interests of the squatters, is really worth preserving. It is as follows:—

"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 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."

What now becomes of all the fervid speeches we used to hear on this side of the House, and outside, from the hon. gentleman, about the squatters? Were these all "antiquated prejudices?" What are we to credit—the Minister for Works, when he spoke before, or now? When he went over and took his place on the Treasury benches I began to hope that he would leave the lump; but, instead of that, he has been absorbed and sucked up into it—so that, instead of standing out as the bold champion he used to be—and as I thought he would be—he has come down and called all the speeches of his former days "antiquated prejudices." I take the hon. member's confession that he once held similar opinions. Then he goes on to say—

"When we see the prospect before us in constructing these western lines it is annoying to find men of even ordinary intelligence using arguments against their construction."

Was not the hon. member, when he confesses to having held contrary opinions, a man of ordinary intelligence?—was he a

man of antiquated prejudices? But whatever may be said about antiquated prejudices, and not being a man of ordinary intelligence, I consider the hon. member to have been in times past rather the member of intelligence, and prefer rather to consider him as now holding antiquated prejudices. I will refer to one other passage to show how the hon. member has really surpassed his leader in endeavouring to serve those among whom he sits. In another part of his speech he says he does not see how the hon. member for Maryborough 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, but is simply leasehold. Let us next see what the Treasurer says. On the 19th June the Colonial Treasurer said that if the Government went to the expense of spending money for the purpose of improving property, that property was a fair subject for taxation whether it be freehold or leasehold. We have the Minister for Works, in his enthusiasm to support the side he is now sitting with, actually surpassing the lengths to which his leader is going. He says leaseholds cannot be taxed; whilst the Premier says all land should be taxed, whether it was freehold or leasehold. I will tell the Minister for Works, however, that this land is not leasehold. The occupiers of the whole of this land have a preemptive right, as the hon. member well knows, to the extent of one-sixth, and these lessees are not leaseholders, but should be looked upon as freeholders to that extent, and so far as this loan goes, the Government, before asking us to grant it, ought to have proposed to raise from them such a sum as would put out of all question any deficiency in the interest.

Mr. KELLETT did not wish to give a silent vote on the motion. Although it had been said by one hon. member that this was only a sham battle, he was perfectly satisfied that the leader of the Opposition meant it for a real one. The hon. member calculated very fairly at the time that there were certain hon. members absent from the Government side, and thought he had the game simply in his own hands, and for that reason there was a full intention on his part to push the matter to an issue. Hon. members opposite might say "No," but that was his opinion on the subject. Another reason that he had for speaking was that the leader of the Opposition said that if hon. members on the Government side were free to express their opinions they would condemn the policy. He (Mr. Kellett) was free, and certainly did not condemn the policy of the Government. He believed in the progressive policy proposed by the Government, and he had heard no good argument,

even from the leader of the Opposition, against it. The hon. member began by saying that he acknowledged money was required for certain works already assented to by the House; he went on to say that he believed in the trunk lines especially, mentioning them as lines that should be carried on. As to the branch lines, the hon. member did not say that he did not believe in them; he could not say that as he himself had advocated them before, but he said they were brought forward simply as gilding. Whether they were so or not he (Mr. Kellett) considered them a necessity, and that they would be of as much benefit to the present population as the trunk railways. The trunk railways would be a greater benefit to the population that they hoped would come hereafter, but at the present time the branch lines would be of greater benefit to the people of the colony. It had been said by several hon. members that they were sending the main lines into a wild country, where they would be unprofitable for a long time. The incorrectness of this argument had been fairly shown by the railway to the Darling Downs. When that line was first advocated it was stated that the Downs would not grow anything, not even a cabbage, and the statement was believed to be correct. There was little produce grown upon it at that time—in fact, most of the produce that was used was grown in West Moreton in those days, the reason being because a larger population had settled down there; but as soon as the railway was made to the Downs, and facilities were given to farmers to bring their produce to market, the country was opened up, —fine agricultural land was opened up, and the Downs was now proved to be fit to grow anything. Hon. members might rest satisfied that the branch railways which had been put forward in these Loan Estimates would prove themselves reproductive, and would prove of great benefit to the country, because they would be feeders to the main lines already in existence and those now proposed. The Central line had been spoken of by hon. members opposite as being very likely to pay, and he quite agreed with them; but he had been very much astonished to observe that during the time the last Ministry were in office they pushed forward that railway so much faster than the Southern and Western line to the great disadvantage of Brisbane and all the southern part of the colony. They had pushed on that line so far that he was satisfied the Southern and Western line could never compete with it, and that in the course of a few years Rockhampton would be the largest town of the colony, and that before long the question would be mooted whether this House should not sit there instead of in Brisbane. And who were the men who had brought matters

to this issue? The great Liberal Ministry—the Queen-street Ministry, as they were well called. No men had so much damaged Brisbane and the southern part of the colony as that Ministry; and he was perfectly satisfied that in after generations the names of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Griffith) of the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas), and Messrs. Thorn and Miles, would be handed down to posterity as the men who had ruined the town of Brisbane. That would be proved before many years were over. The Central Railway, going out and tapping all the best land of the colony, would take away nearly all the traffic from the Southern and Western line. It had been mooted that the Southern and Western line had gone far enough by being extended to Roma, and that the only chance it had of going further was in a southerly direction instead of towards the other line. That was the original proposition—that this line should go towards Tambo; but the Central line was so far started out there, and the quantity of land carriage to the Southern and Western line would be so great, that people outside would not avail themselves of it. The leader of the Opposition expressed a hope that at some future day he would see a north and south line to connect these lines; but he (Mr. Kellett) hoped it would be a long day before they saw anything of the sort, because he was sure it would only be made use of by a few passengers who dreaded the sea voyage, and there would be nothing like goods traffic or anything from which revenue would be derived. As far as he could understand the leader of the Opposition, he was perfectly satisfied with the trunk lines and the branch lines, and the only thing he objected to was that the Government had not stated how provision was made to pay the interest on the money for the construction of these lines; but he (Mr. Kellett) was certain that if these lines were carried out to the western country there was valuable land there that would pay, and pay well for their construction, not only the interest, but the principal as well. It had been seen on the Darling Downs how railways increased the value of land. Besides, this loan was not to be exhausted in one year, and he was sure that next year they would have shown to them how by means of these lands the interest on the cost of these railways would be paid. He had no doubt that they would have a good feasible land scheme brought before them next year, and he hoped that the intelligence of both sides of the House would be brought to bear so as to make it the best Bill that could be passed, so as to provide for the payment of both principal and interest on these railways. If the matter was taken up in a proper way, on something the same principle as the Act of 1868, by resuming

portions of the outside runs and throwing them open to selection when the railways were made there, and by giving increased tenure to the present leaseholders for the part that was left to them, they would find that a large population would come from the other colonies, especially if the land was thrown open in large blocks of from 500 to 20,000 acres. There were men to his own knowledge in the other colonies anxiously waiting to see those lands thrown open, and he was sure that as soon as they were thrown open they would find hundreds and thousands of men coming from the other colonies and elsewhere to settle upon them. The leader of the Opposition objected to the stoppage of immigration, but he (Mr. Kellett) was very glad that it was stopped at the present time, because he thought nothing could be more suicidal than to bring more people to the colony when it was admitted that there was not sufficient employment for those already in the colony. One of the most consistent supporters of the Opposition, Mr. Bailey, did not make his usual able speech in defending them on this occasion—in fact, he found he had a very lame case; he said that they had made a number of blunders, and the only excuse he gave for these blunders was that they were squeezed into making them. He (Mr. Kellett) was very sorry to hear that statement from one of their own supporters; it was a very poor defence, but he supposed it was the best the hon. member could make. The hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) differed from the leader of the Opposition inasmuch as he believed in trunk lines, but not in branch lines. That hon. gentleman was an advocate for pushing six railways through the House not very long ago, and especially the Maryborough line, the most expensive and most useless line ever advocated in that House. It was pushed ahead to save the hon. gentleman's seat in that House; and, although the hon. member was a very able member in debate, in spite of all his ability he (Mr. Kellett) doubted whether something like three-quarters of a million was not too dear a price to pay for his seat. At the same time, the hon. member did not believe in branch railways through the settled districts unless those railways were paid for by local taxation. In those districts the people had next to no roads, and he maintained that railways through the blacksoil country were the cheapest roads and the easiest kept in repair that they could possibly have. He was glad to see that they were put down at a low figure on the Estimates—£2,500 per mile;—and he hoped they would not be allowed to exceed that because he believed the lower the price the greater number of miles they would be able to construct, and produce could be carried on them at a lower rate

than if they cost more. He was satisfied from information he had received from engineers and others who understood railway construction, that good sound lines could be made at that price. The result of such lines would be a large increase in population and settlement, because farmers would be able to bring their produce to market, which at present they were not able to do except at an expense greater than the value of the produce itself. It certainly astonished him to find that the hon. member (Mr. Douglas), who had for years been the leader of the Liberal party and advocated branch lines, should now oppose those lines and advocate trunk lines. It seemed to him that the hon. member was going back to his old days. He was a very large squatter at one time and owned some of the finest land on the Darling Downs, but although he said bullocks did not cost sixpence to fatten for market he was unsuccessful. However, he seemed as if he was going back, in his old days, to his young love, now, when he saw more prosperous times; but he (Mr. Kellett) was afraid he would be no more successful now than he was before. He (Mr. Douglas) was an able man in his own way;—he was a good debater, but he was too much of a theorist; he had not a practical turn of mind, and had been always too fond of shifting from one side of a subject to another, so that they could never know exactly how he would finish up; and, after leading the Liberal party for years, he (Mr. Kellett) was astonished to hear him turn round and say that the farming districts of the colony should not have branch railways except they were specially taxed for them. They had already to pay their share of general taxation, and they were to pay a second local tax for these railways. He was glad the present Ministry did not consider that fair or justifiable, and having brought forward these branch railways he hoped they would soon push them on into progress. With regard to the branch line from Toowoomba to Highfields, he thought it would prove a very valuable and paying line, but he was sorry to see only twelve miles put down on the Estimate, because from his knowledge of the district twelve miles would be very little good. He was satisfied that it ought to have been taken twenty-five or thirty miles at least—as far as Crow's Nest; and his reason for saying that it would prove a paying line was that the timber traffic alone would make it so. There was also a great deal of valuable agricultural land all around, but for the timber traffic alone the line would be more reproductive than any other branch line in the colony. He hoped, if the Ministers inquired into the matter and found that what he stated was correct, they would see their way to make the extension longer than they now proposed. In summing up

his remarks, he had merely to say that the debate had been commenced in a very lame way by the leader of the Opposition. That hon. gentleman's speech was to this effect—that he believed in the entire policy of the Government; that he believed in trunk railways and in branch railways, and that he believed in borrowing money for their construction, but he did not believe in not having the spending of the money himself; and therefore it was that the hon. gentleman hoped by a side-wind to attain that object. But as the country had had experience of the hon. gentleman's party spending money, he thought it would be very chary of allowing them, for some time to come, to have another opportunity of so doing. As an hon. member had remarked, it was the voice of the country that turned out the late Government, and a very large cry it was. He (Mr. Kellett) did not believe there had ever been such a general cry throughout the country for turning out any Government before, and he was confident that if the present Ministry were to go to the country they would be returned again, and that the opinion of the country at the last elections would be endorsed rather than allow the old party to get into power again. He had one objection to the policy of the present Government, and that was in reference to the Divisional Boards Bill. He was sure the country was not ripe for such a measure, and that in the settled districts it would be a very great hardship. The principal point of objection with him was the taxing of improvements—that would be a suicidal tax, as it would be a tax on the industry of the people. At a time like the present when they were trying to foster settlement, it would be a most unwise thing to tax improvements. At a time when there were good crops many men who had made money in other ways turned their attention to agriculture, and spent a great deal of money in building barns and other buildings, but after a few years they had to give up their hobbies, and the consequence was that in many places those buildings were standing now empty and of no value to the owners. But so long as they stood, although there was no interest being obtained on the money expended on them, they would be regarded as improvements and taxed accordingly. Alongside of them might be the lands of men who had never spent a shilling except on fencing—men who were the idle drones in this hive where it was hoped only the busy bees would be seen—and who eat the honey whilst the men who had tried to make the country were to be taxed for their improvements. He hoped when the Bill got into committee it would be so arranged as to be altered in some way from what was now proposed. He had great pleasure in giving his support to the policy of the Govern-

ment, as he considered it would be for the benefit of the country, and he believed it would be for the benefit of the country to keep them in power as long as possible.

Mr. MESTON said it was the wish of many hon. members to speak on the question, and when it was considered how many had spoken that evening it was only right that others should have an opportunity of doing so. With that object he begged to move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER said there had been a clear and distinct understanding between himself and the leader of the Opposition that they should endeavor to bring the debate to a conclusion that night. The hon. member must be aware that it was most important to get on with the business of the country as rapidly as possible, and that there was very little probability of the result of the division being altered by any prolonging of the debate. He (the Premier) was quite prepared to sit and listen to hon. members, but he could not consent to any adjournment of the debate. A motion of a character similar to that they were now discussing was introduced by himself last session, except that it was more important, as there was a more important crisis in the colony; and on that occasion the debate was not only concluded on the third night, but through his (the Premier's) co-operation and assistance he managed to secure that a Bill should be passed through all its stages on the same evening. He knew the leader of the Opposition had been working with himself to get the debate finished that evening. He would remind hon. members that the same reason did not apply to adjournments that used to formerly, as they now had a daily *Hansard*; and no matter how late an hon. member spoke, he would be as well reported as if he spoke at an early period of the evening.

Mr. REA pointed out that the Opposition had offered to go on with the debate last Thursday; but the hon. gentleman would not have it, as it did not suit him. The Opposition had thus shown they were anxious to finish the debate.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was true that he had told the Premier that he should be glad to come to a division that evening, and personally it would be a great convenience to him to do so. But he also told the hon. gentleman that there must not be any attempt to stifle discussion. He considered the present quite as important a debate as that of last session which the hon. gentleman had referred to, and he believed that would be proved by the result of the session. He had done what he could to bring the debate to a conclusion that evening, as he considered that, except under extraordinary circumstances, three nights was quite long enough for any debate; but it must be remembered that it was generally understood on Wednesday

last that the debate would not be over in less than two days. As to hon. member's speeches being reported in *Hansard*, it was well known that after a certain time speeches could not appear at length in *Hansard*, as there would not be room. He had heard that several hon. members were desirous of speaking, and under the circumstances he hoped that the debate would be adjourned till the next day.

The PREMIER said that his only reason for adjourning over Monday was that the debate would be finished that (Tuesday) evening. As to his not having consented to proceed with the debate on Thursday last, it was entirely with a regard to the convenience of hon. members who had private business on the paper.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that the adjournment of the debate over Monday was his suggestion, as he pointed out that a great many hon. members could not possibly attend on that day. As to closing the debate that evening he never heard it mentioned till the afternoon, and he then said he would do all he could to bring it to a conclusion.

A long discussion on the order of procedure ensued.

Question—That this debate be now adjourned—put.

The House divided:—

AYES, 24.

Messrs. Griffith, Price, Dickson, McLean, Rea, Stubley, Paterson, Rutledge, Meston, Bailey, Miles, Kingsford, Mackay, Douglas, Garrick, Hendren, Kates, Groom, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Grimes, Beattie, Thorn, Horwitz, and Tyrel.

NOES, 27.

Messrs. A. H. Palmer, Macrossan, Perkins, McIlwraith, Walsh, Scott, Hill, Cooper, Norton, Stevens, Hamilton, O'Sullivan, Persse, Lalor, Thompson, Kellett, Stevenson, Sheaffe, Low, Morehead, Amhurst, H. W. Palmer, Baynes, Simpson, Beor, Swanwick, and Archer.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. STUBLEY moved the adjournment of the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it would be much to be regretted if the debate, after having been so harmoniously conducted, should result in a sudden rupture between the two sides of the House. The feeling of ill-will engendered in a few moments would take a very long time to dissipate. He had done his best—he had even gone out of his way—to bring the debate to a close this evening, and had persuaded several members to speak much more briefly than they had intended to do. Then, there was his own reply, which the Premier was good enough to say he would give him the opportunity of making. He would hardly do justice to himself at this hour, after having been hard at work since ten o'clock in the morn-

ing. That privilege he feared he would have to forego, if the motion was pressed to a division to-night.

The PREMIER said he gave the leader of the Opposition all credit for having endeavoured to bring the debate to a close to-night; but when he found that a small section of the Opposition attempted to coerce their leader and take the leadership out of his hands, it could not be said he was wanting in courtesy in refusing the request of the leader of the Opposition they forced on him, and in insisting that the debate should close to-night. Three nights were surely sufficient for a debate of this kind; and if hon. members on the other side wished to speak, he was prepared to listen to them patiently. The hon. member for the Kennedy (Mr. Stubley) had deliberately told him that if the debate was pressed to a division to-night he was determined the Government should do no business this session, as he would obstruct everything. Was that a kind of thing they should give way to? If they sat till the day after to-morrow, the hon. member would find that his threat was perfectly futile.

After further discussion,

Question put and negatived.

Mr. REA said he did think that after the concession made last week to the Government something like fair play would have been allowed, and some consideration would have been shown to members on the Opposition benches; but, as the Government had insisted on the debate going on, they must take the consequences of any animadversions that might be made upon their conduct. The real question in the debate had not been touched upon at that sitting. It was not a question of the railway policy of the Ministry, of the squatting policy, or the policy of land sales; it was also not the banking question or the immigration policy of the Government; but it was the whole policy of the Ministry combined, since they took office last January, that the House had been asked to give its decision upon. The first thing that would occur to a stranger coming into the Assembly would be to inquire as to what the Ministry had done since January? He found that the first item was the correspondence between the banks and the Treasurer. This document had long since reached London, and he was quite confident that, in reference to the proposed loan, the men on the London Stock Exchange would be holding their sides in derision at such a document having been allowed, for it indicated a foregone conclusion on the part of the Colonial Treasurer to get the whole moneys within the power of the Treasury of Queensland, and place them in a bank in which he himself was interested. What did this show but that the whole manœuvring of the Ministry had been to get the

money of the colony under their control with a view to lending it to their own followers. The next step was taken in the month of April, and it was to get the whole of the coast lands in the colony within the grasp of the Ministerial followers. The Government held the whole of the auction sales in one day of a territory larger than had ever been attempted to be sold in any part of the world. Such a transaction as that would have been enough to have caused any other Parliament to refuse its confidence to the Ministry guilty of bringing it about. The next transaction took place in the same month, when the Government made a bargain with their own bank that it should have the use of the public money, and when the House came to examine the condition of that institution they learnt that it was a limited liability bank, and therefore liable only to the amount of its shares. He would ask any man if he believed that any other Parliament in the Australian colonies would have tolerated any Ministry doing such an act? There was also the further question in connection with the bargain made as to the carrying out of the enactments bearing upon the squatters. When he put the question to the Minister for Lands as to whether he was going to cut up the runs not bid for to 25 square miles each, the only answer he got was—no. If the object of the Ministry had been to foster population on the coast districts of the colony, what better opportunity had any Ministry than they had on that occasion? But the answer he received proved that the whole object of the Ministry now that they had got into power was to do away with all the control of the lands of the colony, except by the squatters and for the squatters who supported them. It was easy to see that it was owing to the nature of the followers who supported them—who left the House during debate, but at the call of the division bell they strutted in with the aspect of Indian nabobs. But when they came to be examined beyond the surface, it was found that they were mere Brummagem, or pewter imitations of anything like independent men. That was what governed this country now, and he would ask if in any of these colonies such a class of supporters of a Government would be tolerated for one hour? The hon. member for Moreton had pointed out that on the Government side of the House there were twenty tenants of the Crown out of the whole House. The total number of members was fifty-five, and half of that was twenty-seven, so that in reality there were only seven members on the Ministerial side of the House that could be called independent members. Was not that enough to make any man in the House desire to see the colony governed according to the usages of other colonies

or of England? Was it not enough to call the attention of the country to how votes were carried in that House and to the class of men who carried them? They heard a very candid statement to-night from an hon. member opposite as to the way in which a squatter going to a bank for a loan might be treated—that if he did not do all he was told to do the screw would be put on; and that gave some reason for the conduct of hon. members opposite—that the banks would put the screw on if they did not vote and do as they were told to do. They had also heard to-night something that accounted for the votes of those hon. members—namely, the fact that they held large areas of country over the border in South Australian territory. That showed what was meant by railways to the setting sun. He believed that such a thing had never before been heard of. The runs of those hon. members would be benefited by those railways out west, but at the same time they would bear no part of the taxation of this colony. That was the whole secret of why they were called upon to vote this three millions of money. On the 17th June last he (Mr. Rea) made certain proposals for the appointment of commissioners to examine into and ascertain what benefit the pastoral lessees would each gain in saving of carriage and interest of money by these railways, so that it might be seen how much they should fairly contribute to the Treasury; but even that proposition would not be entertained by the Government, showing conclusively that the coast towns and other towns of the colony were to be taxed for these railways that were to be made for the benefit of the Crown tenants. Therefore, he said hon. members on that side of the House had no alternative but to vote for the want-of-confidence motion, seeing that the Government refused so plainly to put any tax on the Crown tenants. When they came to examine other parts of the conduct of the Government, what did they find? When the question of cutting down high salaries was before the House, the Colonial Secretary said nothing in his life had ever given him so much grief as reducing those salaries. He (Mr. Rea) only wished they had an artist for London *Punch* there to draw a cartoon depicting, as it ought to be depicted, this new Jeremiah of Queensland in lamentation that was breaking his heart. Then they would have depicted this new phase of a nation's grief over the reduction of the salaries of a few highly paid favourites; they would have first a sob and then a hiccup for these unfortunate men. But was there any lamentation when these men were dismissed from Ipswich, when it was not a reduction of salary but complete dismissal, so that some of them had to sell their cottages and leave the colony? They heard nothing of

the grief then, nothing of the sobs, nothing but the hiccups. That was what was addressed to the working men, and it was only men in high positions luxuriating in high salaries for whom he felt sympathy. Then he came to the bank business, and he would ask hon. members if in the history of any of the colonies there could be found anything so disgraceful as the action of the Government in this matter? He had heard taunts from hon. members opposite that nothing definite had been brought forth—that this was a mere vague motion of want of confidence—but there were plenty of charges that could be brought against them, and he would challenge the Government to test the country by a general election on this, which was only one out of a number of them—

“That this House is of opinion that the mercantile good sense of the people of this colony will be outraged should that system be carried into effect which is now threatened to be carried—namely, that those who can influence the handling of the public money as Executive Ministers should also be allowed to handle the same money in their private capacity, and trade with it to their own private advantage and to the advantage and profit of their own political supporters.”

That was definite enough, and he challenged the Government to appeal to the country on it and see if they would be re-elected. But their conduct under this general vote of want of confidence claimed attention, and it was their whole conduct they had now to consider. They refused to admit any further discussion on the question because they knew the more it was stirred the less it smelled like *eau-de-Cologne*. They had telegraphed for their supporters, and having got them together they insisted upon a vote being taken, although they refused to take it last week. But now they had their supporters together who dare not vote except as they were told—who knew that they would be sold off if they attempted to vote in any other way—they insisted on a vote being taken. For that and other reasons he had insisted on an opportunity being given for a fair expression of opinion from hon. members on his side of the House. The whole object of the Government, as stated by the leader of the Opposition, was to get hold of the money without making any promises as to how it should be spent. It could easily be understood why they had not brought in any plans or specifications for their railways, because their object was to zig-zag their lines in order to reward their supporters and to punish their opponents. Such being the case, if the Government had once the command of that money, they might shut the doors for the next three years. Now, what did they read of the action of the Government in lately throwing open for selection large areas of land in the immediate neighbour-

hood of some of the principal inland townships? In a leading article of that day's Brisbane paper it was stated that such action “should be specially favoured by the pastoral tenants.” But then it went on to say—

“Unfortunately, however, there are a few of the latter who have learned nothing from experience—not even the wisdom of maintaining a discreet silence”——

That was the policy to be observed by the opposite side——

“when their opinions are such as they must well know the public will not approve.”

The same paper in another article said—

“We are inclined, also, to agree with Mr. McIlwraith that the plan of going to London every year for a loan is a bad one, and the reasons given for his proposal to borrow at once enough for three years are sound.”

That was the Premier's own mouthpiece, and he (Mr. Rea) would like to know which told the truth, the mouthpiece or the hon. gentleman? That was the mouthpiece of the Premier, and yet it had been an accusation against the late Treasurer that he refused to give information in London of his intention to put another loan on the market until the old one was taken up. What would people at home say if, before one loan was successfully floated, another one was launched? They would say that a Treasurer who did such a thing was neglecting the interests of the colony. Hon. members opposite, with all their experience, knew nothing of the way in which loans were floated. Last year, when the present Treasurer brought forward his loan for £3,000,000 and was defeated, when the reasons for rejecting it were made known they at once had the effect of sending up our debentures; but what would be the case when it was known in London that if the Government got hold of this money they would—and the cat was let out of the bag by the Minister for Lands—place it where it would bring good interest, not to the country, but to the pockets of the three members of the Government who were members of a bank directory? The Government might say that they were not going to put into the banks more than was necessary, but he contended that it was contrary to the principle of the House of Commons, or to that of any of the other colonies, that members of a Government who had the handling of public moneys should be directors of a banking company. The honourable member for the Mitchell, a few evenings ago, when indulging in a tirade against the Germans, spoke of Queensland as being the freest country in the world; but was a country governed by three bank directors worthy of such a name?—would such a thing be tolerated in any other colony? Why, it was placing members of that House in such a despicable position that they ought to be ashamed

of their manhood. It was not the immigration question, or the railway question, or the bank question, but the whole three together, and the conduct of the gentlemen placed in authority, that demanded attention, and he and others would not be doing their duty if they did not speak out in the most unmistakable manner in respect to them. He had picked up a piece of paper that evening, which he believed would show the whole object of the loan. It was in the form of a nursery rhyme as follows—

There was a bold Politician, who lived in a Stew,
He'd so many Runs he knew not what to do;
He went very far south to get them secured,
But when he came back—he found himself floored.
They'd soon have to be stocked, and were so far
away,
That without long lines of Rails they never would
pay.
So he said to his chums, with you I'll go snacks,
If you'll vote straight and square for three Railway
Tracks;
They threw up their hats, saying, we're in for the
spree,
We'll vote for your millions—one, two, or three.
He gave them a wink to attend to his order,
Saying, "Our runs can't be taxed for they're over
the border."

Mr. STUBLEY said he had spoken to the leader of the Government at an earlier period of the evening and asked him to adjourn the debate, and the Premier had refused. He (Mr. Stubbley) now informed the House most emphatically that, as his request had been refused, he should henceforward be an obstructionist to all Government measures. He might or might not vote with the Government on this particular question; but if he had been inclined to vote with them the Premier's words would have deterred him. It was a very unjust principle to go on, that because Government had a majority at their back they should force a division to-night. That was force purely—there was no intellect in it. Government could not stand up and fairly argue the question; and he was prepared to stake everything he had, against an equal sum put down by Government, and take to a swag to-morrow if he lost, that Government could not construct the Charters Towers line at anything like £3,000 a-mile. It was perfectly ridiculous to say so to anyone who knew the country as he did, and it showed that they were not sincere in their intentions by proposing it. The hon. member for the Cook had had the impudence to tell his constituents that to get £60,000 for them to be spent in rivers, bridges, and roads to the diggings was nothing to what he would do; but if he (Mr. Stubbley) had had time to have prepared himself, he would have explained the whole business of the Government, so far as the three-million loan was concerned. It was the greatest fallacy possible. Was it to be thought of for a moment that the colony should be bound to borrow a certain amount of money only during the next four years?—for, supposing the mining industry were to look up, another period of prosperity might set in, and it might be neces-

sary to still further develop the country. There should be no limitation of the amount to be borrowed; they might want £5,000,000 as well as £3,000,000. Besides this, he did not agree with the ideas of the Premier and the Minister for Works, that they could borrow three millions cheaper than they could one million. That was absurd. They should only borrow what the House would pass, and should not pledge it to any definite amount, and if the Opposition allowed the Loan Vote to pass the House it would be the ruin of the country. He repeated that he had felt inclined to vote with the Government, but would not after the manner in which he had been treated. He had asked the Premier to allow the debate to be adjourned, and the Premier had said, "No." He (Mr. Stubbley) had then said that he would obstruct as much as he could, and the Premier replied that he didn't care if he (Mr. Stubbley) did. He would tell the hon. gentleman that vote should never pass if he could get three hon. members to work with him.

The PREMIER moved that the leader of the Opposition be heard in reply.

Question put and passed.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I shall not at this hour of the morning say anything like what I intended to say. I intended to have said a great deal, but owing to the extraordinary manner in which the debate has been brought to a conclusion it must remain an unfinished debate. I regret this because it would have been far better if the matter had been thoroughly discussed and fought out—we might then have had a fair start afterwards; but as the Government have thought fit to take advantage of their majority of two or three to prevent that conclusion, the consequences must be thrown upon them. I am sure that by this time the Premier must have regretted that he permitted his temporary loss of temper to induce him to insist on the debate being brought to a conclusion this evening. If we had given way to the same weakness, we could have kept the debate going till to-morrow evening without any result at all. The matter is one of too great importance for tactics of obstruction to be used on either side, especially the tactics of brute force. I have been taunted both in the House and in the Press with having given no satisfactory reasons for bringing forward this motion: it is hardly necessary for me to justify myself on that point, because I consider I gave ample reasons when I introduced it. If any further reason is necessary I need only say that the whole of the country regards this proposed policy of the Government with the greatest alarm. I have been accused of being half-hearted in this matter; but, if so, it is my misfortune to have appeared so, for I was never more thoroughly in earnest than

in expressing my condemnation of the proposals of the Government. I am not, as some of the Ministerial party are, a man who boasts that he has no stake in the colony. I have a stake in the colony, and I regard the colony as my future home, and the welfare of the colony as the one object which is most my concern in this life. If ever there was a matter vitally concerning the prospects of a young colony it is a proposal of this kind, which is a mere leap in the dark—a speculation like gambling: if it is successful it will bring us out all right, and if unsuccessful it will lead us into financial troubles which may take more than a generation to get rid of. One honourable member this evening—he scarcely deserves notice—suggested that I was in earnest because we thought that last week we could snatch a majority. Cannot that hon. gentleman rise to the conception that his political opponents may be actuated by principles of fair-play? Can he not at least give them credit for common-sense and prudence? It is not likely we should be so foolish as to snatch a temporary majority in a thin House, more especially when a large majority of the whole colony condemns the policy of the Government. It is high time that the Opposition spoke out as they have done, knowing that they have the country at their back. I have been told this evening that I do not possess the confidence of the members of the Opposition. With regard to what has occurred this evening, I would never exercise any influence I may possess to stifle an important debate, and did not do so; but I am happy to think that I do possess the confidence of the gentlemen who work with me on this side of the House. With regard to the present motion, I was led to bring it forward because every member of the Opposition agreed that it was our imperative duty to place on record our disapproval of the rash and reckless policy of the Government. When I brought this motion forward I gave in substance three reasons why we should disapprove of the proposals of the Government. The first was because their proposals were indistinct, indefinite, uncertain, unknown, and undecipherable; secondly, because they were insincere with respect to a very important part of their policy; and thirdly, because there was no accompanying financial policy, as there ought to have been. What answer has been made to those charges? No public works policy can be satisfactory to any intelligent legislature or community unless it combines those three qualities. It must be distinct, sincere, and accompanied by a proposal to pay the interest on the added indebtedness. With respect to the charge of indefiniteness, there has been absolutely no answer made. I complained that we did not know where the extension from Roma was to go to. We were

told that the railway was to be extended 130 miles; and when I asked where it was going to, the only answer I got was that it was going to the setting sun. With respect to the extension from Charters Towers, no information was given. It may be going north-west, or south-west, or anywhere, and the only answer I got was, an endeavour on the part of the Minister for Works to bring this side of the House into unpopularity by misrepresenting what I said, and implying that I had spoken of the line from Townsville to Charters Towers as being quite as absurd as a railway to the moon. What I did speak of was an extension of the line from Charters Towers to nowhere in particular. With respect to the Central Railway, we did get some information—we were told that it was going due west. We were asked to borrow £1,200,000 to construct these railways, and the only information given us about them is that one is going due west and that the others are going somewhere. With respect to the charge of insincerity, there has been no answer. They have not even attempted to show that the proposal to make a branch line towards Clermont is other than wholly insincere; and the same may be said with respect to the line to Sandgate and the other branch lines. All we are told is, that those lines ought to be made for the money put down against them, and, if not, they should not be made. Proposals of this kind ought to have been accompanied by definite information as to the mode of construction; and the only conclusion we can arrive at is, that in putting forward those proposals the Government are insincere. I appeal to the House, and, if it is against me, to the country, for a verdict in this matter. I complained, further, that they have proposed no means of providing for the payment of the interest on the proposed loan. Some sort of answer has been attempted to be made to that, but to the other charges none whatever. The Colonial Treasurer tells us a large loan is necessary—for what?—to keep the workmen now employed by the Government still going. To borrow money for such a policy is absolutely ruinous, and the sooner we abandon it the better. But I do not believe the money is wanted for any such purpose, for if it were so not more than £418,000 of the whole amount could be applied to it. All the rest of the money could not be employed until Parliament has met next year and approved of the plans—until the land has been resumed and the contracts let, which cannot be until the end of next year at the earliest. Not a farthing of the rest could be employed for the purpose suggested, and must, if borrowed, lie idle in the banks.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. GRIFFITH: We will take the items *seriatim*. There is the extension from Roma. It is impossible that any money

can be spent on that until the end of next year at the earliest. As to the extension of the Central Railway to Retreat, we know there are no plans ready, and the work cannot be authorised till next year; if it can we do not know, because, although we have asked, we have obtained no information about it. On the extension of the Northern Railway, we know it will not be wanted for three or four years. The only money available for the purpose of keeping the men going is the £418,000 for completing works already begun. With respect to the branch lines, none of them can be authorised till next year, and most of them are not even surveyed yet. Yet we are told that whether we can spend the money profitably or not we must have it. We are next told, "This is your own policy; why are you attacking it?" In my opening speech I distinctly declined to say who were the originators of the policy, because that is a matter entirely outside the question. The charges I made against the present policy, however, are none of them applicable to the policy of the late Government, which was definite and sincere, and included a scheme for meeting the interest on the loan. What I object to is the absence in the present policy of all those qualities which made the policy of the late Government worthy of consideration. Then we are told that plans are not necessary—that the New South Wales Parliament has voted seven million without having any plans. What miserable quibbling! We do not object because there are no plans on the table of the House, but because we are not told where the railways are to go to. The New South Wales Government did not ask for a million for a line from Tamworth to the moon. They asked for money for a line from Tamworth to Tenterfield—a rational proposition worthy of being submitted to rational men. Such a line might deviate a few miles one side or other of the coach road, but it would, at least, connect two towns. With respect to revenue, we have been told that no additional source of revenue will be required. The Colonial Treasurer says the land revenue will be sufficient. If we ask where he is going to get it, he simply says—"Trust me; it's all right!" But where is it? We are told the lines will be reproductive; and I admit that if they will be at once reproductive, asking where the interest is to come from is an idle question. The branch-line propositions are so transparently insincere that they do not deserve further discussion. I wish to consider the trunk lines, for which we are asked to borrow £1,200,000. We know the 130 miles extension to the western line cannot be completed within five years of the present time, and who is to pay the interest in the meantime? The extension from Charters Towers, also, cannot be made in less time. With

regard to the Central line we are told that when completed it will pay, and we were given statistics to show that there are at the present time 3,000,000 sheep in the Mitchell and Gregory districts, that in five years they will have multiplied to 12,000,000, and by that time the freight on the wool from the 12,000,000 will pay the interest on the money. But who is going to pay the interest during the next five years? From where, also, did the Minister for Works get his figures? The Treasurer's tables state the number of sheep in that district at 1,500,000 and not 3,000,000. What becomes of the hon. gentleman's calculations then?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Warrego district.

MR. GRIFFITH: Oh, I did not understand that the Central line was to go into the Warrego district. If that is the case, it is new light on the subject. In the course of five years, if all goes well, the freight may pay the interest for these lines. I believe they will ultimately be reproductive or I should never have advocated their construction; but we are all agreed that they will not be so immediately. It is idle for the present purpose to say they will some day be reproductive, and equally idle to say that the present lines pay 3½ per cent. We know they do not do so. The Minister for Works has been continually harping upon the fact that they do not pay. It is even now a question, at the present low rates, whether bullock-drays may not successfully compete with the railway between Charleville and Dalby. Under these circumstances, no sane man having any regard for the interest of the country can propose to borrow these large sums of money without making also a proposition as to how the interest is to be paid meanwhile to prevent us from getting into inextricable financial difficulties. We know, and the Government know, although they have not the courage to make the proposition, that someone will have to make it. They know the money to pay the interest will have to be found, but they put off the evil day. One hon. member told us to-night that when we come into power we can do it; and no doubt that expresses the views of the Government. They say—"Give us the money and let others pay for it; we shall have the money and certain advantages appertaining to it." I do not mean to say advantages for themselves, but for those parts of the country they more particularly represent. I call that rank cowardice. It is trusting to the future, like a reckless spendthrift or gambler. When we were in office we proposed certain means of paying the interest, and if they were insufficient the mistake was an honest one; and that principle of the railway reserves will yet have to be applied to pay the interest on the construction of these railways.

No one knows that better than the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. The Minister for Works tells us the lines will be immediately reproductive, but the Premier proposes to pay interest on them out of land sales. Where would the price come from in the present state of the colony? We shall be repeating the process going on in New South Wales—the money borrowed will go into the banks. We shall want £100,000 a year more to keep going. To get that extra £100,000, land will be placed in the market. The squatters will buy the land and pay for it by overdrafts at the banks made out of this very money. In this way a portion of this money will be credited to revenue as well as to loan. As well as standing in the banks to the credit of the Government loan account, it will stand there to the Government revenue account. The land will be sold nominally for cash, but really on credit to the banks. The money will be doing double duty—apparently a large sum will be in the banks to the credit of the Government when there will be really none at all. Then, he says, a great advantage will be gained by borrowing one loan in three instalments. The position taken up by the Opposition to borrow about one million at a time as wanted is objected to, but what conceivable advantage can there be in going into the money-market and saying, "We are going to borrow three millions, but only want one million this year?" What shall we gain by authorising a loan of three millions except that the Government will gain the advantage of being able to borrow the whole amount at once; and seeing the way loans are floated in London, there may be a syndicate to float the whole loan at once. If so, the bulk of the money will remain idle, and we shall pay interest on it. If we are to borrow three millions, what can we gain by pledging ourselves for three years to borrow no more during that period? Is there anything rational in this? The real facts are, that the amounts put down are admittedly inadequate for the work they have to do. Either the Government will be prevented from carrying out these works, or they will be compelled to go to the money-market within three years. I shall not follow the Minister for Works through his elaborate attempts to prove that these lines will pay. He told us about cheap lines in Victoria made for less than £3,000 a-mile, including rolling-stock and permanent-way. The facts are, that up to the present time the cheapest line let in Victoria is for £3,300 per mile, exclusive of rolling-stock and permanent-way. That is the last information received by anyone but the Minister for Works; and as the Minister for Works declined my challenge to give the name of the railway he must take the consequences.

The PREMIER: I accepted the challenge, and said I would put the papers upon the table.

Mr. GRIFFITH: The papers have not been put upon the table yet, and there has been plenty of time to do so; but I have a shrewd suspicion that we shall not see those papers. Then we were told the astounding fact that grass rentals alone have hitherto paid the interest on all our railway loans. Why did the hon. gentleman not say that the interest had been all paid out of Customs or Excise? It is all moonshine. There is not even a correspondence in amounts. I agree that the interest of this loan ought to be paid out of grass rents, and will have to be paid out of such rents some day. At this time of night I shall not say anything about the proper mode of raising the interest upon this loan. If the money is voted it is clear the interest will have to be raised, and it must come from the western lands. I have waited in vain for any light to be thrown by the Government upon this subject. I shall take the opportunity, when the House is more willing to listen and I am more fit to speak, to say something more upon the subject. It is sufficient now to say that the Government have made no proposal whatever for the raising of this interest. We have had some vague apologies; the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Thompson, whom I am very glad to see back again, justified himself for voting against this motion on the ground that it did not much matter—that the Government deserved a further trial because they were doing very unpopular work; and, really, that this motion was rendered necessary to complete the six lines the present Opposition initiated when in office. But the hon. gentleman forgets that the completion of these lines forms no part of the policy challenged in this debate. What is objected to is, that the Government have brought forward no proposition for paying the interest on the new lines. The hon. member for Cook said that the debate had been a waste of time. I do not think it has been. I believe a good deal of light has been thrown upon the matter during this discussion. One thing at least has been proved—that of all the members on the Government side of the House, not two have been found to get up and say they cordially agree with the policy of the Government. At any rate, not more than two agreed with it as a whole—thus have "damned it with faint praise;" others do not approve of this or that; and others have maintained a discreet silence, though, no doubt, in committee they will venture to speak. Although the division may be against me now—not, however, by a strong majority—I have no doubt the result will be to show the country that the

proposals of the Government are wholly insufficient; that the Government have shown an utter absence of recognition of the real necessities of the case—necessities incumbent upon any Government that proposes a loan policy of this magnitude. Under these circumstances we should have been wanting in our duty as an Opposition if we had not pointed this out. If we are beaten we shall make the best of it. We shall endeavour to save the country from being ruined. We shall endeavour to force upon the Government some rational means of paying the interest on this loan. It has been said that I said, on bringing forward this motion, that I did not desire to carry it. I said nothing of the kind. I do desire most heartily to carry it, although I did say that I had no desire at this time to accept the responsibilities of office; but in bringing forward a motion of this kind I am perfectly aware of the responsibilities I undertake, and I am bound to accept them. I feel it is a very grave responsibility to bring forward a motion of this kind, but circumstances justify it and render it imperative. There was no alternative, and I repeat we should have been wanting in our duty if we had not pointed out the defects of the Government policy, and I have no doubt that these defects will be remedied—not remedied this session, perhaps—but I know that the defects pointed out to-night will be remedied, and that the Government will have to give us some definite statement as to their intentions. They will be bound to show their sincerity, or the money for these insincere propositions will not be voted. As to the rest they will be compelled, either with or against their will, to make some rational proposition to relieve the finances of the colony from the confusion in which they will fall if their present reckless and ill-considered proposals are carried into effect.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put.

The House divided:—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. A. H. Palmer, McIlwraith, Perkins, Macrossan, Cooper, Persse, Beor, Hamilton, Archer, H. W. Palmer, Simpson, Thompson, Lalor, Amhurst, Baynes, Sheaffe, Morehead, Stevenson, Kellett, Stevens, O'Sullivan, Hill, Low, Walsh, Norton, and J. Scott.

NOES, 23.

Messrs. Garrick, Griffith, Dickson, McLean, Meston, Rea, Thorn, Rutledge, Bailey, Douglas, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Miles, Kingsford, Kates, Mackay, Grimes, Hendren, Stubley, Beattie, Price, Tyrel, Groom, and Horwitz.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the Speaker do now leave the chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply—put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a sum not exceeding £100,000 be granted from Loan for Immigration.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the Chairman left the Chair, reported no progress, and obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said it had not been the custom to register pairs made on important divisions. There was one made in the last division, and it was important it should be made known and recorded. Mr. Paterson, for the Opposition, paired with Mr. Swanwick, for the Government.

The SPEAKER said it was agreed the other day that in cases where there were pairs they would be recorded in "Votes and Proceedings," if handed in writing to the Clerk, but not otherwise. He did not know whether the pair referred to had been handed in.

The PREMIER said he was not aware of the rule. He would now ask whether it would be sufficient if the pair were handed in to-morrow?

The SPEAKER said that if the notice were handed in writing it would be inserted.

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned at five minutes to 2 o'clock a.m.