

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 20 AUGUST 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 20 August, 1879.

Question.—Petition.—Pairs.—Formal Motion.—Motion for Adjournment.—Supply.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. KATES asked the Minister for Lands—

1. When he intends to go on with the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876 Amendment Bill?

2. Whether it is true that 5,000 acres of the recently surveyed lands around Allora are to be sold by auction?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) replied—

1. When the state of the public business permits.

2. The matter is under consideration.

PETITION.

Mr. MILES presented a petition from selectors on Beauaraba Homestead Area No. 3, praying for a reduction in their rents.

The petition having been read—

The SPEAKER ruled that the petition could not be received under the 202nd Standing Order, which says—

“No application shall be made by a petition for any grant of public money, or for compounding any debts due to the Crown, or for remission of duties payable by any person, unless it be recommended by the Crown.”

The second paragraph of the petition aims at compounding debts due to the Crown in asking a reduction of rent, and on that ground the petition could not be received.

PAIRS.

Mr. TYREL rose for the purpose of drawing attention to an innovation which appeared on the Business Paper that morning. In the record of the division which took place on the debate of the previous evening, it appeared that Mr. Paterson paired with Mr. Swanwick, but it did not appear on which side those hon. members had paired. Looking at the facts as conveyed by the paper, it would appear that Mr. Paterson had paired on the side of the “Ayes” and Mr. Swanwick with the “Noes,” but it would be well in future to record whether hon. members paired for or against a motion. It was a very good innovation to record the pairs; during the session he had himself paired with an hon. member on the other side, but there was no record of it whatever. The form in which the pair was recorded in this case did not show on which side the hon. members had paired, and it was desirable that it should do so.

The SPEAKER: I have directed the attention of the Clerk to the matter. This is the first time on which a pair has been recorded, and I am not quite certain that the hon. members themselves informed the Clerk on which side they would vote; and hence the form of the record.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. SHEAFFE—

That there be laid upon the table of the House—

Copies of all Papers and Correspondence relating to the six months' leave of absence granted to Warden Bligh in 1877.

Also, of all Papers and Correspondence conveying instructions to Warden Gill to relieve Warden Bligh.

Also, of all Papers and Correspondence relating to Warden Hill's transfer from Byers-town to Ravenswood, and the appointments of Wardens Towner and Farrelly.

Also, of all Papers and Correspondence relating to Warden Gill, from the time he was first instructed to proceed from Ravenswood to Gympie, to the 21st July last.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of saying something in connection with the precautions which ought to be taken to provide against the contingency of fire in the Parliamentary Buildings. He understood the Building Committee had reported two or three times in connection with this matter. There was a slight irregularity, he understood, in a question which stood in the name of the hon. member for Mackay on the subject; and, as it had not been asked, it was desirable that attention should be directed to the fact that the Parliamentary Buildings Committee had frequently reported on the subject. He did not know whether any steps had been, or were being, taken to provide against the contingency of fire, but he knew that some of the gas-pipes and flues connected with the supply of gas were somewhat dangerously situated, and in had been reported they were more than once almost red-hot. He hoped the Minister for Works would be able to say something in reference to the recommendations of the committee, and that they might be properly attended to. The risk of the building from fire was very considerable. As a matter of policy it was not necessary the buildings or the valuable library should be insured—on that point the Library Committee held various opinions—but they ran a risk from being uninsured. He hoped steps might be taken to carry out the recommendations of the Building Committee.

Mr. AMHURST said he had very good authority for saying that ever since the building had been in use the chimneys had never been swept. Hon. members would recollect that yesterday the library chimney took fire, and a little time ago, in the other portion of the building, belonging to the Legislative Council, one of the chimneys was examined and there was only a half brick between it and the woodwork. Had it taken fire the whole building would have been burnt. Did the Government intend to insure the building? It would certainly be of much benefit to have the valuable library insured, as Government would not be inclined, in case of its destruction, to vote the money to replace the books, especially as it would amount to a very large sum. The annual expenditure for insurance would not amount to much. It was also to be recollected that up-stairs they had records of the history of the colony, in the shape of newspapers, which showed the rise and progress of every town where they were issued, forming a valuable history of the different towns of the colony. If they were destroyed it would be a great loss in future years, because they could not be replaced, and Government should

therefore make some arrangement to have them put in a safe place.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the blame had not been put on the proper shoulders. The librarian, who led a life of lettered ease, might attend to these small matters—such as the sweeping of the library chimney. Hon. members might laugh at him if they liked, but yesterday the building was very nearly set on fire, and surely it was not the business of the Building Committee to see whether the chimneys were swept or not. The librarian took life very easily, and did his work very easily—he sat behind his desk and did nothing. Compare the conduct of this officer with that of the late librarian. That gentleman took some trouble. If an hon. member went into the library and wanted a book, he assisted him to find it; but now hon. members could go in and hunt for themselves, as the librarian gave no assistance whatever. It was not an unfitting time to direct attention to the officer when an accident had occurred which he (Mr. Morehead) attributed to the negligence of the librarian, who did not perform properly the duties of his office. If an hon. member went to him, he either did not care or would not care, and gave no assistance. He was put there to be of assistance, and, so far as his (Mr. Morehead's) experience went, he was a most lamentable failure.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said that the danger of fire to the building had been made too much of; at the same time, the recommendations of the Building Committee were of such a moderate character to put the building beyond the risk of fire, that he could intimate to them that the Government were quite prepared to recommend the amount necessary. That would be done. As to the second part of the question—whether Government intended to insure the buildings and the library, he could say it was not the intention to insure either. If they were to insure these there was no reason why they should not insure all other Government buildings, but Government acted as their own insurers. The real risk was against those books or papers which the Government could not replace. Insurance, however, would not any the more enable them to replace such things, and the remedy, therefore, appeared to be not by insuring, but by taking proper precautions against fire. Government did not intend to insure.

Mr. KINGSFORD said that after the accident of yesterday they could not be too careful. He was quite certain that had the chimney caught fire in the night-time very serious consequences would have ensued. The amount of red-hot soot that came down the chimney was something alarming, and

he considered that the building narrowly escaped destruction.

Mr. GROOM said he could not coincide with the Premier's remarks as to insurance, and he felt convinced that it was high time the principle of insuring the Government buildings was established. He could not see what possible objection could be raised against it. Public buildings had been destroyed by fire in the colony before now. Four or five years ago the Toowoomba Hospital was burnt down, and the Hospital Committee had to apply to the House for £1,200 to rebuild it. In the Parliamentary Buildings there was the most valuable library in the colony, containing books invaluable for reference, and which it would cost a vast sum to replace. Besides these there were the volumes of newspapers, which were in themselves a history of the rise and progress of the colony. The latter were stored in such a way that a lucifer match, thrown by accident by a person lighting his cigar, might result in the destruction, not of them alone, but of the entire building. It was not as if the colony had a sinking fund like the A.S.N. Company, from which it insured its own vessels. Numerous wooden buildings were going up in all directions, and if they were destroyed by fire the loss would be complete. He believed it would be a valuable precaution on the part of the Government to insure public buildings erected at the cost of the country, more especially those in the city of Brisbane. He did not think the House would begrudge the very small sum that would be required for premiums—at least, nor for the insurance of the Parliamentary Buildings and their valuable contents. As to the newspapers and other valuable records, he would suggest that they be kept in a strong-room where there would be hardly any risk from fire, for it would be impossible to replace them if they should be destroyed. The only record there was of the speeches made during the first Parliament were contained in the newspapers of the day.

The PREMIER: Insurance would not prevent their being burnt.

Mr. GROOM said that by placing them in a strong-room the risk of their being burnt would be reduced to a minimum. The careless and indifferent way in which they were at present thrown aside might any day result in their destruction, and perhaps, at the same time, the destruction of the entire building. Somebody's attention ought to be devoted to the proper preservation of the newspaper volumes; and as to insurance, it was a matter worthy of the consideration of the Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he could not agree with the hon. member (Mr. Groom) that it was the duty of the Government to insure public buildings

against fire. If they insured one they would be bound to insure all, and an enormous sum would have to be annually paid away for premiums. On school buildings alone the sum would pay for all the fires that were likely to occur for years. Even with regard to the Parliamentary Library, no amount of insurance would enable them to replace valuable books copies of which were not extant elsewhere. The duty of the Government was to provide against accidents from fire. The buildings were placed in a very curious position: they were in a state of divided responsibility, and no one could say in whose charge they were. During the session, this portion was supposed to be in the charge of the Speaker, and the other portion in charge of the President of the Legislative Council, assisted by the Parliamentary Buildings Committee; but neither of them, as far as he (Mr. Palmer) could see, accepted that charge which, theoretically, they were supposed to take. If the buildings were placed in the department of the Minister for Works, as they ought to be, it would be his duty to see that proper safeguards against fire were taken. There would then be no chimnies separated by only half a brick from the woodwork, and the danger from the gas-pipes would be made to disappear. Out of session the Minister for Works had a little to do with the buildings, but he did not consider them as in his charge. With respect to papers and documents lying about in the manner described, that was simply the librarian's fault, and it was the duty of the Library Committee to call him to account and make him do his work. He had had occasion to complain of that gentleman's conduct last session, but had seen no amendment in his manner since. He had never applied to the librarian for assistance but once, and he would no more give it him than he would have given it to a blackfellow. That officer lived, as the hon. member for Mitchell had said, a life of lettered ease; he never moved out of his seat, and in his (Mr. Palmer's) opinion the sooner he was got rid of the better. There was not an officer in the Civil Service who earned his money more easily and did less for it than that gentleman. As to the responsibility for the safe keeping of the buildings, it was very desirable that some hon. member would move a resolution placing the buildings in the hands of the President, or the Speaker, or the Minister for Works, or the Buildings Committee, or anybody they liked, so long as he was in sole charge and responsible for its safe keeping. Until that was done very little would be done.

Mr. McLEAN thought the best plan would be to put the buildings in charge of the Minister for Works. Some one, at all

events, should take the responsibility, because the structure was in peculiar danger from fire. The passage between the refreshment room and the Chamber was nothing but a funnel through which a fire originating down stairs would rush, and, if it once got possession, all the fire engines in the colony would not put it out. With regard to the library, he thought the librarian had never risen to the responsibilities of his position. It was quite useless to look for any assistance from him; and that poor old man, the messenger, did all the work. This was another instance of the rule in the Civil Service that the man who got the least pay did the most work. The messenger did all the work, while the librarian sat in his chair and would scarcely look at an hon. member. During the four years he had been a member of the House he had scarcely seen one go to the librarian for assistance or information. They all went to the messenger, who got what they wanted at once. He should like to see the buildings put under some one's definite charge, for it was in great danger from fire, and he should not be surprised if they were destroyed by fire any day.

Mr. SCOTT said that, as far as he could judge, there was no one responsible for anything connected with the safety of the buildings. He happened to be in the library yesterday when the chimney caught fire, and he felt confident that had it taken place at night, or when no one was about, the whole structure would have been burnt down, for large pieces of red-hot soot rolled on to the floor which would speedily have set on fire the surrounding very inflammable materials. It was curious that the man who assisted to put out the fire had nothing to do with the House, but happened to be looking after the gas. The sooner it was decided who was responsible for the different departments in the building, the sooner there would be some chance of safety.

Question of adjournment put and negatived.

SUPPLY.

The PREMIER moved that the House form itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. GROOM said that had the Premier consented last night to the adjournment of the debate, it would have finished by six o'clock, and the House could have gone on with business. In speaking to the subject now—as he intended to have done last night—he was discharging a duty to his constituents from which he could not shrink, and he was sorry his hon. colleague (Mr. Davenport) was prevented by circumstances from being in his place to discharge a similar duty; but he was authorised by that hon. member to say that there were items on the Loan Estimates to

which he would not consent. As far as he (Mr. Groom) was personally concerned, he was prepared to concede to the Government that a loan was necessary under present circumstances. The item of £418,000, to carry on works already authorised, he was ready to vote for, and also for the items for branch railways with one or two exceptions. He should give his opposition to the line to Sandgate, believing it to be perfectly unnecessary in the present circumstances of the colony, and the £52,000 down for it might well be devoted to taking the railway to deep-water in order to facilitate the coal-producing industry, which would give employment to labour and be of great importance to the colony. Beyond that he was not prepared to go, and he was prepared to join with hon. members on this side in giving the other items the strongest possible opposition—with regard to the extension of the three trunk lines, even to the extent of dividing the committee shilling by shilling. To that he was pledged. He would at once express his extreme disappointment at the course of action pursued by the Premier since his accession to office. From previous statements made by the hon. gentleman, he (Mr. Groom) felt perfectly sure that, having obtained office, he would have adopted a course of action quite different to that which had driven a considerable amount of labour and capital out of the colony. He fully expected from him that his first object would have been to encourage local industries—that simultaneously with the promulgation of a loan he would have come down to the House with a revised tariff. They were continually hearing about the depression that existed in the country—that farmers were unable to dispose of their produce, and that even the graziers were feeling the effects of the low price of stock. The policy of the Premier would do nothing to relieve the prevailing monetary depression in any shape or way, and he (Mr. Groom) was morally convinced that the three-million loan, if voted, would not have the slightest effect whatever upon it. What was wanted was the establishment of industries that would give employment to the population. At the present time the population of the colony, instead of increasing, was decreasing to a very marked extent. In all the large towns they found shops empty, houses deserted, and rents down to a price which hardly paid the owners. Those were not indications of prosperous times; they were indications of monetary depression which the Premier's loan would in no way ameliorate, even though it was extended over three years. He had had the pleasure, lately, of reading the speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer of Canada, Mr. Tilley, when introducing his budget to the Dominion Parliament; and if the Premier of Queens-

land had adopted a similar course to that statesman he would have commended himself to the admiration of the country. The Canadian Dominion, at the time of the last general election, was precisely in the position of Queensland at the present time, with this exception, that it had on its borders an enterprising population of forty-five millions who inundated the country with manufactured goods, and destroyed the industries of the Canadian people. What was the policy presented by the Canadian Treasurer? When he went to the Treasury he found it—as was the case in this colony—empty; and his first act was to go to England and float a loan of three millions. Unfortunately for him, he arrived in London at the time of the City of Glasgow Bank failure, and he had to sell his debentures at a low price; but, low as they were sold for, the price was equal to what the Queensland loan realised—namely, £88—in March last. He not only floated the loan and took the money back with him, but he placed it in the various banks—not confining it to one, but scattering it among all of them, and he simultaneously brought boldly before Parliament a revised tariff, which was a work of art in itself. If the Premier had not seen it he should strongly recommend him, knowing his views with regard to establishing local industries, to read it in the pamphlet published by the Canadian Government, which contained not only the budget speech, but also Mr. Tilley's reply to the whole debate which followed. That reply would be found to be one of the most masterly productions of a man who knew the position of his country, and was determined to make an effort to establish industries and keep its population within its boundaries. In addition to floating that loan and establishing a protective tariff, thereby increasing the revenue by 2,500,000 dollars, he went again to England within the last four weeks and floated another loan of three millions, in accordance with the policy which Parliament had approved. He was more successful in floating that loan than any previous Government had been, simply because he had satisfied the English capitalists that he had taken the proper means to pay the interest on his loans. If only for that speech, and the policy it enunciated, he well deserved the honour of knighthood which Her Majesty had been pleased recently to confer upon him.

The PREMIER: Was there no other reason why the loan was so successful?

Mr. GROOM: Not that I know of.

The PREMIER: Half of it was guaranteed by the Imperial Government.

Mr. GROOM said, if so, it was for the construction of a railway extending into the Northern province of Manitoba. There could be no doubt that the confidence of

the English capitalists was strongly attracted by the fact that the revised tariff secured an increased revenue well able to meet the interest charges.

Mr. WALSH: What has been done in Victoria?

Mr. GROOM said that the hon. member for Cook said, "What has been done in Victoria?" and he would tell him that Victoria now stood foremost amongst the Australian colonies.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. GROOM said that no one could read the grand oratorical effort of the Premier of that colony, the other day, without being convinced that he had done his work in a most masterly way; and that speech showed beyond a doubt that Victoria now stood foremost in the Australian group in the English money-market. If proof were wanted, the price at which the debentures of that colony were quoted would supply it. They realised a high price simply because English capitalists knew perfectly well that the revenue would be forthcoming to pay interest upon them. The Premier might say "No," but that was his (Mr. Groom's) belief; and, although most of his information was derived from reading, he had given as much attention to Victorian politics as the hon. gentleman. He could not but admire the speech of Mr. Berry before the Victorian Parliament, which he considered was sufficient to establish his reputation as an Australian statesman beyond any doubt. He clearly showed a due appreciation of the responsibilities of his office; and, however much the spirit of selfishness might be attributed to him, he had proved that he possessed a thorough knowledge of the wants and requirements of the colony, and studied the best and truest interests of the people. In that respect Mr. Graham Berry stood in marked contrast to the hon. gentleman who occupied the position of Premier of Queensland. That hon. member had not carried out the policy it was believed he would have, and which hon. members were led to believe he would have initiated. He (Mr. Groom) was led by him to believe that so far from pursuing a policy which would drive away the bone and sinew from the country, the hon. gentleman would have taken an opposite course and done everything to keep the people in the colony. For instance, he never hinted to any hon. member that he was going to introduce those wholesale retrenchments. He had not made them among the Civil Servants, whom he was afraid to touch; but he had made a raid upon the Ipswich workshops, and even attacked the limited number of men in the Toowoomba workshops. Had he hinted at such a thing before the elections he would not have been sitting where he now was, and he would not have got his (Mr. Groom's) vote, which he had secured

under false pretences. He had never hinted to him (Mr. Groom), either, that he was going to take the action he did in reference to the banking account of the colony.

The PREMIER: I hope the House thoroughly understands that the hon. member refers to what I have said publicly. I have never had a private communication with the hon. member, except once, in my life.

Mr. GROOM said he was speaking of the speeches of the hon. gentleman in the House, and statements made in other places. If he wanted a text, he would take the speech of the hon. gentleman delivered at Bundaberg, and would say that the hon. gentleman had acted in direct opposition to the election speech he made to his constituents. With regard to the banking account, his colleague (Mr. Davenport) desired him to state to the House that in his opinion, if the Government were to be entrusted with a loan, they should first show that they were prepared to wisely expend it, and to provide safe banking arrangements; also, that in his opinion, the present contract was a one-sided one, which no business man in a private capacity would sanction. Had the hon. member (Mr. Davenport) been in the House he would probably have said a great deal more. In justice to the hon. member who was not present to speak, he (Mr. Groom) had his authority for stating his distinct dissent from the banking arrangement of the Government. That arrangement had been productive of ruin to some persons. When the Colonial Treasurer sent his notice, eight days after his acceptance of office, that a sum of £50,000 would be removed from one bank and transferred to another, did he contemplate the ruin entailed upon business men through his action? Those banks had been compelled to call in overdrafts and restrict discount, and thereby to destroy the credit of men engaged in banking concerns.

The PREMIER: It is not true.

Mr. WALSH: All the banks do it.

Mr. GROOM said all the banks did not do it. If £50,000 were withdrawn from a bank it must be obtained by that bank from somewhere. He was not going to praise and extol the Queensland National Bank, because the very action the Government had taken was quite sufficient in itself to create any doubt people might have had outside. He had no desire to say anything that might tend to create a panic, but he would say that a very unfair preference had been shown, to the injury of other banks and of business-men dealing with those banks. As a case in point, he would mention that a man in good circumstances applied to be relieved from difficulties in connection with one of the banks. The manager answered, "How in the name of

fortune can I help you when I have just received a letter from the Treasurer of this colony calling upon me for £50,000? I must provide that first, and, if I can help your friends afterwards, I shall have no objection." But in the meantime ruin came on.

The PREMIER: Name?

Mr. GROOM: I shall not give the name of the man or the bank.

The PREMIER: There is not the slightest foundation for the statement.

Mr. GROOM said it was all very well for the Premier in his glorification to laugh. Those might laugh who won;—but he had won his position not by fair honest means, but by false pretences—he had indicated a policy and gone in direct opposition to it. The hon. gentleman never gave the remotest indication of his policy of retrenchment. Did he say he was going to introduce his Divisional Boards Bill, and, after three years' drought, call upon farmers to be taxed to provide for their own roads and bridges? In his speech at Bundaberg, he said that at the end of last session he had got certain hon. members on his own side to rise, one after another, and obtain £40,000 for roads, for no purpose but to embarrass the Treasury.

The PREMIER: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. GROOM said that the hon. gentleman was reported in the *Bundaberg Star* to have said that his position was perfectly logical and clear—that he, while on the Opposition, saw the Government looking after their own supporters, and therefore he got certain hon. members to propose amounts which, with the consent of the majority of the House, were voted. Would the hon. member deny that?

The PREMIER: Yes; I have denied the statement, as read from the *Bundaberg Star*, twice.

Mr. GROOM said if the hon. member denied the report, he was bound to take the denial. He went by the newspaper report, which was not contradicted at the time. Did the hon. gentleman, when on the Opposition side of the House, give the country the least indication that he was going to bring in the Divisional Boards Bill?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. GROOM: Can he quote any speech to that effect?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. GROOM said it was perfectly true the hon. gentleman gave his consent to the Local Government Bill when introduced by the late Government, but he said it would be perfectly inoperative, because it would be permissive and not compulsory. The Government had no right to force upon any community a measure that was distasteful, and the permissive principle was, in his opinion, the right one, unless a scheme of local government were to be made general throughout the country. The Bill, as

framed at the present time, would not be made general throughout the colony, but was undoubtedly a tax upon the industrial portion of the community. There was not the least provision made for the case of improved lands. For instance, on the Darling Downs, the small farmers and selectors who had improved and cultivated their lands at a great expense and made lucerne paddocks would be very heavily taxed, while the large graziers who depended upon the natural grasses would pay a comparatively low tax. The people were told that the railway scheme of the Government would not entail any additional taxation; but what was the Divisional Boards Bill but additional taxation? What was the £100,000 which was to be scattered broadcast at the dictation of the Colonial Treasurer but additional taxation? With regard to trunk railways, he considered that, looking to the depressed condition of the colony, the discharge of working men, the Estimates cut down to the lowest minimum, the Divisional Boards Bill obliged to be introduced to relieve what was called a depleted Treasury—it was the duty of every representative of a populous constituency to stop any further extension of railways into the western interior. The people were told the lines were going to pay, but what were the facts? According to returns laid upon the table of the House, and supplied by the Commissioner for Railways, the line from Brisbane to Warwick, a distance of 158 miles, yielded to the Treasury last year £145,000. The line from Brisbane to Dalby, 130 miles in length, for a similar period, with the extension to Miles, from the 1st of August, and with all the advantage arising from the wool season, yielded £44,000, clearly showing that where the line passed through closely populated agricultural districts a large revenue was returned, and where it passed through a country where there was no settlement the returns were very small. The 130 miles from Rockhampton to the Comet only yielded £58,000, and yet the people were told that those lines to be extended at the expense of the general community would make a much larger return. No sensible business man would believe any such nonsense. Some hon. members seemed to think that loans entailed no burden upon the country; but the amount deducted for interest from the general revenue was in itself additional taxation. With such a prospect of additional taxation staring people in the face, and, considering that the greater part of general revenue was derived from the Custom House, he was of opinion that it would be better to rest, and not extend those lines until the circumstances of the colony improved so as to warrant their further extension. He was never more astonished than when he heard the

Minister for Works say that the natural grasses paid the interest on the Queensland railways. That hon. gentleman must surely forget the history of the country. Did not the hon. gentleman remember that in 1866, after the extension of the Ipswich railway to Dalby and Warwick had been entered upon, it was almost a question whether the colony should not issue greenbacks after the American system. That was actually proposed to be done, but the Governor hinted that he should feel bound to withhold his assent from such a proposition. In lieu of that the Treasurer, Mr. John Donald McLean, issued Treasury bills bearing 10 per cent. interest for three years, took them down to Sydney, and sold them at 10 per cent. discount in the Sydney market. The Government had also to impose a stamp duty and an *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. That was what had to be done to raise revenue to pay the interest on the cost of construction of railways; and for the hon. gentleman to say that the natural grasses paid was almost an insult to any man of sense who knew anything of the history of those times. With regard to pastoral rents, the rentals of the stations on the Darling Downs, after the construction of the railways, were assessed at almost the same value as before, and there was no increase of revenue from that source. Huge estates there were actually held at a lower rental than second or third rate hotels in the city of Brisbane; and yet it was now asserted that the pastoral rents would pay, not only for the interest on the cost of construction, but £280,000 besides. It was a perfectly new and novel thing to propagate ideas of that sort. As the scheme stood at present, the whole country would be taxed to pay for the construction of those railways. The Treasurer said he proposed to relieve the deficiency by taking over the £120,000 from the Railway Reserves Account to general revenue. The natural inference from that was that the revenue itself must bear the payment of the interest. The colony was now taxed as much as it could possibly bear for interest for railway construction. If the Colonial Treasurer would propose a revised tariff, so as to encourage industry and give employment to the population already here—if he would strike out new ideas in new channels, he (Mr. Groom) would have no objection to support him. But if the hon. gentleman was going on the old course—that because the late Government, in 1876, proposed six railways he must out-Herod Herod and propose ten—then he was not prepared to consent to any such proposition in the present position of the colony. If it were necessary to exercise such a rigid retrenchment to bring expenditure within means, then it was suicidal to attempt to carry on such works. What information had been given with regard to probable

traffic? Before the House would consent, in 1863, to the formation of a single line they insisted on having working plans, sections, and every possible information respecting the traffic likely to accrue. And there was some reason for that line, because it was to be taken from this district to the Darling Downs, where it was known there was a very rich territory and a population settled which was likely to increase. What had taken place on the Darling Downs should induce any man to act with extreme caution in assenting to any propositions for similar railway extensions. He could remember when the Darling Downs land was all held under leasehold. The pastoral tenants in 1851 held it on fourteen years' leases. They exercised their pre-emptive rights—one of the most mischievous powers under their lease—and alienated a very large portion. In 1863, 4, 5, and 6, they alienated still more, and no sooner was it known that the formation of a railway had been sanctioned than a scramble set in to gain possession of every acre. The Minister for Works had referred to his (Mr. Groom's) experience on the Darling Downs as to whether railway extension had facilitated settlement; and he would say that, as far as the limited area left for occupation was concerned, it had. In the neighbourhood of the towns, as soon as the line was sanctioned, the land was dummed in every possible direction. Under the instruction of employers, blank applications, without any areas stated, were signed by shepherds, and magistrates were found ready to attest the signatures to these blank applications. He was now relating facts which were obtained by a select committee of that House over which the Hon. J. Douglas presided. In that way the Darling Downs passed out of the hands of the people. What guarantee had they that, as regards the country which the proposed main-line extensions would open, the same line of policy would not be adopted; and that, long before the railways would be finished, the runs would be converted into freeholds? They had already seen what had taken place near Roma, where the whole of the best land in the vicinity of the town had been bought up. What guarantee had they that the same thing would not take place as regards the western country, for the opening of which these extensions were intended? The holders of the runs had a pre-emptive right to one-sixth, and there was not the slightest protection to the general public as far as the alienation of land was concerned. If the Government were prepared to come down with a Bill providing that the lessees through whose runs these main trunk lines would pass should bear the interest upon the cost of construction, he had no objection to consent to the Ministerial proposal;

but if this were not done he should give it his most determined opposition, and use all the forms of the House to defeat the passing of the Loan Estimates for these three extensions. He was bound to take this course, and in following it should have the fullest and heartiest assistance of his constituents. That a loan was necessary for public works was true; and here he would point out that, even according to the Treasurer's statement, there was not the least necessity for creating the panic that was caused a few months ago. The hon. gentleman's statement showed that the colony's indebtedness on April 30 was a little more than £10,000,000; but it also showed that there was then a credit balance at the loan account of £1,600,000. What was the use of creating a panic, and saying that unless another loan was at once obtained public works would be stopped and men would be driven out of the colony, when this was the actual state of affairs? Good men had been driven out of the colony in the most unjustifiable manner—in a way that would be remembered to the Government's discredit for a long time. He had been amused to see how soon the Government had sent information home in regard to certain matters. In the *Times* of June 10 there was a telegram which had been received by the colony's Agent-General, who, he presumed, had also been instructed to communicate its contents to the *Times*. This telegram was as follows:—

“QUEENSLAND. — The Agent-General for Queensland has just received the following telegram from the Government of that colony:— Treasurer's budget delivered anticipates surplus next year. No increased taxation. No alteration in tariff. Estimates show extensive retrenchment. Government have decided to open loans on railways and public works only for making fertile lands available for settlement, and proposes further loan of three millions. They have a strong majority in Parliament. Press approves budget.”

That message, he presumed, cost the country between £10 and £20. He did not know whether it was sent with a view of influencing the newspaper extract read by the hon. member for Darling Downs last evening, but it struck him that there might possibly be some connection between the two. They were being asked to make railways to the setting sun, which was, as the hon. member had shown, in the direction of Alice Springs, where Messrs. McIlwraith, Tully, and Drury had taken up 8,500 square miles of territory, where Mr. McIlwraith had taken up 2,400 miles for himself, and where Mr. De Burgh Persse had taken up 6,000 square miles in the same direction. That was where the setting sun was. This paragraph had gone the round of the English papers, and the House could well understand why a telegram had been sent to England to inform the home capital-

ists that three lines of railway were to be extended in the direction of this magnificent territory. He assumed that the information contained in the paragraph was correct, for he could not believe that anyone had been base enough to mislead the English public in regard to the matter, and he should very much like to know whether it was consistent with his official position for Mr. Tully to be figuring in the position indicated by the paragraph. There they had the Premier of the colony; Mr. Tully, who was Under Secretary for Lands and also Surveyor-General, and who was therefore possessed of official information; and, strange to say, Mr. Drury, the manager of the Queensland National Bank—who was said to be as much the governor of the colony as the Colonial Treasurer—taking up conjointly 8,500 square miles of country just over the Queensland border. The mystery was solved—there was now no doubt where the setting sun was, and where the railways were to be taken. The duty of the representatives of the people was plain. The information was abundantly supplied that the whole colony was to be taxed to extend railways in the direction of these gigantic runs, which had been taken up on such moderate terms as hardly existed elsewhere. The total area taken up amounted to 16,900 square miles, representing over 10 millions of acres, and the annual rent the applicants had to pay was £422 10s. per annum for seven years. The whole amount they would have to pay in seven years was £2,957, and after that time the rent would be 10s. per square mile. An hon. member said the country had all been forfeited, but no official information of forfeiture had been received. The fact of these names going to the public was quite sufficient to create suspicion in the public mind regarding the railway scheme of the Government. They had here one of the highest officials in the colony, a gentleman in charge of the Lands Department, and who should therefore be eminently above suspicion, combining with the Premier of the colony and the manager of a bank which would soon be the public bank of the colony, in taking up a large area of country. It was perfectly true that it was situated over the border. This gentleman was able to tell where the border was situated and which was the best country. It did not bear a good appearance to see this report going to the public simultaneously with the Ministerial scheme, and hon. members had a right to express their opinions in relation to it. If any proof were wanted to satisfy hon. members of the injury the colony would sustain by going in for these railways, it was supplied by the manner in which they had been advocated. They had heard a great deal about the traffic that would be produced by an increase of sheep

in the interior, but they had more to consider than sheep. When Sir Henry Parkes introduced his railway scheme, he stated a beginning and an end for every line. Take the one which would come close to this colony's borders as an example—it was stated that it would be taken from Tamworth to Tenterfield. He (Mr. Groom) was surprised to hear the Premier say that no plans were laid before the New South Wales Parliament in connection with that line, a statement which showed that the hon. gentleman had not made himself conversant with the real position in which the railway scheme of the neighbouring colony stood. The railway had been surveyed from Tamworth to Tenterfield, and the working plans and sections had been approved by Parliament. The contract to Uralla had been given to Amos Bros. for £610,000, and what was called a feature survey had been made as far as Tenterfield. There was another feature survey of a line to be taken *vid Inverell*, but it had been decided to take the line direct from Uralla to Tenterfield. Tenterfield was not the "setting sun," but was part of a rich agricultural district. The line in question passed near tin mines of great richness, and near the silver mines recently found at Boorook, and through an agricultural district where there was a population of something like 20,000 or 25,000. The other line of railway—the branch from Wallerawang to Mudgee—also passed through a magnificent district. Besides, even supposing the Premier of New South Wales had introduced a railway scheme without having the slightest information, it was absurd to say that this colony should do the same. That hon. gentleman did know, however, what he was about, and stood in quite a different position financially than the Premier of this colony. The reason New South Wales stood better financially than this colony was because it was not continually disturbing its land laws. The people knew what they were about when they took up land, and the result had been that the indebtedness of the free-selectors to the colony amounted to ten millions of money secured by their possessions. The interest payable by these men under the Act passed in 1875 amounted to £500,000. The annual indebtedness of the colony was £10,000,000, and the interest payable by the selectors was sufficient to meet the interest upon this amount. Then, in addition, vast areas had been sold by auction; and the colony had between two and three millions of pounds to its credit in the banks. The colony did right to go into the home money-market to borrow seven millions of money to be expended in railways to districts where there was a large population settled, and where there was a large trade to be derived. The circumstances differed entirely from the course of action taken here. As to the probability

of the main lines proposed here paying, he would ask hon. members to look at the weekly return published in last Saturday's *Government Gazette*. On the great Western Railway there was a deficiency of £699, notwithstanding that the line passed through the most thickly-settled part of the colony. Then, as to the Central line, the receipts had dropped down from £960 to £600: here they had 160 miles of railway, and the freights for passage and traffic only yielded £600. An ordinary retail shop in the colony would take as much money in a week, and yet the House was asked, without any information to warrant it in acceding to the request—without surveys being effected and plans being ready—to extend the Central line 130 miles more, at a cost of £390,000, with the interest of which the whole colony would be saddled. Next, with reference to the branch railway to Clermont, they had no information to guide them about it. If they took the votes polled at the last Clermont election—one of the sharpest ever contested in the colony—as an index to the number of male adults there were in an electorate, there were only 321 adults in Clermont, and yet they were asked to vote £50,000 for a branch, not to, but towards Clermont. What expense it was likely to lead to was not known. They had been told by hon. members opposite that the seat of the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) cost the country £250,000 and even more; but because they had committed one error were they going to secure the seat of Mr. Weld-Blundell by voting this £50,000 and what might come after? He should reply certainly not. If it was necessary to profit by experience, the time had come now when they were called upon to vote these large sums. So far as the construction of railways in the past had been concerned, the Minister for Works had not done the justice he should have done to the early pioneers of railway construction in this colony. The difficulties under which they laboured in 1863, in connection with the building of railways, were very heavy; and it was unfair to draw comparisons between the existing railways then and now. At the time the railway between Ipswich and Toowoomba was constructed, iron rails cost from £14 to £16 per ton; but, on looking over late English papers, he had seen that two contracts had been taken—one by a Scotch, and the other by an English firm—to supply one thousand tons of the best Bessemer steel rails at £5 2s. 6d. per ton—a very important difference. As had been remarked by the Premier himself, every year advances in railway construction were made, and it was not fair to contrast the cost of the colony's railways in 1863 with the present cost. In 1863 the population was comparatively small, and they had not the services of

several first-class engineers at command. They were compelled to take one man's advice—Mr. Fitzgibbon's—and he (Mr. Groom) was one of those who stood out against the advice of one man being taken as to whether the right route had been surveyed; but the majority were against him. He was one of those who opposed the railway scheme of that time, on the ground that the necessary information had not been obtained; but when Parliament met after the general election in 1863, the railway policy of the Government was adopted, a majority having been returned to support it. They were told that the railway between Ipswich and Toowoomba would be constructed for £4,000 per mile. He believed that Mr. Macalister honestly thought the line could be carried out for that amount, and the first section let from Ipswich to Grandchester did lead to the belief that it could be built for the estimate; but they were grievously misled. If they were involved at a large expense, it was perhaps perfectly unavoidable; but the circumstances and the times were now altogether different. They had to learn by the experience of the past. He had learnt many things since he had first entered the House, and one was, that no reliance could be placed on estimates regarding the cost of projected railways. He would not place the least reliance upon the items contained in the present Loan Estimates, and he would venture to say that not one of the railways mentioned in them would be built for the sum stated, and that the Government would be compelled to come down with Supplementary Loan Estimates to complete the works. He might take the Fitzroy Bridge as a case in point. When were they going to hear the last of it? For the benefit of a municipality this bridge was being built at the public expense, and it would be interesting to know what the cost to the country would be. An enormous amount had already been voted, and now they were asked for a further sum of £9,000 to complete the work. This was a sample of what estimates were when brought down in connection with public works. As to the railway from Toowoomba to Highfields, it would never be built for £2,500 per mile. If it cost £2,500 per mile to construct railways in the Northern district when the lines ran on the surface of the ground, it was going beyond anyone's belief to say that such a line as the one from Toowoomba to Highfields, running entirely over spurs and requiring embankments and cuttings and bridges, could be constructed for the same amount. Moreover, if the Government contemplated to take it no further than twelve miles from Toowoomba, it would be a perfect waste of public money. If it was to be of any advantage, if it was to produce any traffic, and relieve the colony from the

burden of paying any interest upon it, it should be taken to Crow's Nest, as the hon. member for Stanley had said last evening. It would then tap one of the richest timber districts to be found in the Australian colonies, and prove a mine of wealth. And in connection with the timber question, he would ask the Colonial Treasurer whether the existing system of denuding the country of its best timbers was to continue unchecked? Was there to be no safeguard?—was the colony to receive no value for its valuable timbers? In looking over his northern exchanges he had been particularly struck by the fact that ships were actually loading at some of our northern ports with nothing but cedar—no doubt, of the most valuable description; and yet the colony was deriving no benefit from the export of that timber beyond the small license-fee paid by persons for cutting it. In fact, too little attention was paid to forestry in Queensland, and one of those days it would demand very serious attention. In connection with the report on forestry, issued by the gentleman in charge of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens, he saw a reference to the introduction of the Norwegian system, which was certainly not a bad one. Whenever a native of Norway got married he was supposed to plant a tree in commemoration of the event; and in that way they improved the timber-producing interests of the country. He certainly thought something ought to be done in this colony in connection with our forests, out of which men were making huge fortunes, while the colony derived no benefit whatever from that source. If this Highfields Railway were extended to Crow's Nest, as it ought to be, it would tap one of the richest timber-producing districts in Australia—timber of the most valuable description; and the traffic from that trade alone would return a revenue which would pay not only working expenses, but the interest on the cost of construction. With regard to the branch line to Killarney, there was no information as to the route it was proposed to take. If it was to be of any benefit at all, that line must be in crescent form, so as to start from Warwick, and run through Freestone Creek, Farm Creek, Emu Creek, to Killarney, and in connection with that there must be roads made to enable the people to reach the line. He was not one of those who believed that branch railways were going to be the salvation of the agricultural districts. Judging from the opinions of some people, they seemed to think that these branch railways would come to their very doors—that they would have nothing to do but step out of their doors and put their produce on the railway; but a greater mistake was never made. He believed that if lines were made to Fassifern and

Mount Esk there would be as great dissatisfaction with the roads of those districts as there was at the present time. Roads would have to be formed from the different farms to reach the railways, and these lines would not be the panacea for all the ills which farmers laboured under, as they seemed to think they would be. He did not think he need trouble the House with any other matters. If the Government proposed to carry out the works authorised by Parliament he was prepared to give them his assent; but he should take the course he had already indicated with regard to the other items in the Loan Estimates—that was that he would oppose the construction of trunk lines until the affairs of the colony were improved and more information was supplied on these matters than they had at the present time to show that the lines would be of a remunerative character, and that the country would be justified in their construction.

Mr. GRIMES said the loan policy of the Government was likely to affect so considerably the interest he had the honour to represent, that he did not think he should be doing his duty if he simply contented himself with voting against it as he did last night, and he therefore wished to take this opportunity of also raising his voice against it. He had no hesitation in saying that it was the most extravagant Loan Estimate that had ever been presented in that House, and it had been formed not only to catch votes in that House, but also to gain popularity outside. He would also remind the House that it was not the same estimate which was first brought down, but of a very different character, and a most extravagant one. The Minister for Works had continually harped upon the statement that the policy of the Government was for the benefit of the working men of the colony; but it was rather unfortunate that he could not get the working men to believe that, and he (Mr. Grimes) was afraid that even this amended Loan Estimate would not gain that popularity. Although working men were sons of toil, they were men of intelligence who could see a little deeper into things than they were given credit for, and he thought they could see through this loan policy of the Government. What was the opinion they expressed upon that policy when the election for the Valley came off? How did they treat their trusted friend the Attorney-General? Where did they see him? Not in that House—he was conspicuous by his absence. He was outside the bar of that House as a cart-horse out of harness, looking over the slip-rail waiting to get in; but the Ministry had not yet been able to find a place for him, and he questioned whether they would ever be able to find a place where they could trot him out and run him

with any chance of success. Presently, perhaps, they might see him placed in the upper stables. Then, again, what was the expression of opinion they had heard from the electors of Bulimba, which was essentially a working men's electorate? What did they say to their member because he had formed associations with the present Government? Hardly a week passed that they did not see in the newspapers of the day reports of indignation meetings, expressing in unmistakable terms their disapproval of his course of action. And, again, what was the verdict of the Darling Downs electors? A most emphatic verdict that the working men and the farmers of the Darling Downs did not believe that the works policy of the Government was for their interest. It was very ungrateful, certainly, of the working men to look upon the policy of the Government in this way after the statement of the Minister for Works that it was for their benefit, and he thought the hon. gentleman might well say, as he did the other night—that the whole conduct of human life was unsatisfactory. The true friends of the working men were those who advocated a policy that would be for the permanent prosperity of the colony. He said permanent prosperity in contra-distinction to that ephemeral kind of prosperity which might be brought about by borrowing large sums of money and spending it in public works. There was no doubt that such a course of action would bring about a measure of prosperity at the present time; but was it likely to last, or in any way to benefit the working men of the colony in the end? It had been remarked that the men who generally found employment on railway works were of a migratory character, going from place to place wherever large public works were engaged in, and they did not find many of those engaged in navy work settling down on the land and making it their permanent home. He ventured to say that not one-quarter of those who had taken up land under the homestead clauses were men who had saved their money when working on the railways of the colony, but fully three-fourths of these were men who had been working on farms and plantations, where they got an amount of experience, and found that, although they might not have quite so much money to handle, there was a chance of making comfortable homes for themselves and their families. The raising of large loans and expending them in public works placed a fictitious value upon labour, and tended in a great measure to hinder the development of other industries. He quite agreed with the late Treasurer that the colony was not now in a position to raise large loans to be expended upon public works that were not productive, and that if they did so they were bound to go in for increased

taxation. The Treasurer had acknowledged that of this loan one-fifth was to be spent on works that were not reproductive, and he (Mr. Grimes) said under these circumstances they were bound to submit to increased taxation, and the result would be to check most of the industries that had been started in the colony. It would check agriculture. Those who took any interest in agriculture must have noticed that the produce of the colony came up so nearly to the demand that the quantity of farming produce usually grown in it, even in poor seasons, that when they got an ordinarily fair crop there was such an abundance that the supply was more than the demand—there was a glut in the market, and prices came down until it was not remunerative to grow these crops. It must therefore be evident to those who had thought about these things, that, if there was to be any amount of prosperity attending the agricultural interest in Queensland, they must look forward to growing something they could export. But even if they succeeded in doing that, they would then come into competition with other countries where the taxation was not half so much as it was in this colony. Take, for instance, wheat: they had been trying to encourage the farmers on the Darling Downs for some time to grow wheat, and to a certain extent they had been successful; but although the crops on the Downs were much larger than those obtained in South Australia, there was really less profit made out of them than the farmers made in South Australia. In South Australia the taxation was something like £1 10s. per head less than it was in Queensland, so that they could afford to pay what would be equal to the same wage that they did here, and make a larger profit. And not only did it affect agriculture, but our mining interest would be checked by this increased burden of taxation. The price of tin had come down so low that many patches of land hitherto worked had been abandoned. The price of labour suitable for tin-mining was as high now as it was before, and the price of tin having come down so much as it had, and the working expenses for obtaining it being the same, those patches of land were not now remunerative; but if they had less taxation, and the wages of labouring men were brought down to such that it would pay the proprietors of this land to go on mining, it would give a large amount of extra labour, and many of those here now walking about doing nothing would be engaged on those tin mines. The same might be said of gold and coal mining, and all other industries of that kind, so that it would be seen it was really essential that they should keep down taxation as much as they could; and not only so, but they should re-

member that by bringing into the colony large loans to be spent upon public works they kept labour up at a fictitious value, such as could not be maintained by the ordinary industries in the land. Amongst the other items the Treasurer mentioned as not likely to prove reproductive was immigration; but he thought that if immigration was carried on properly it should not be placed amongst the unproductive items in these Estimates. In the report lately furnished by the Registrar-General of this colony there was a quotation from a thirty-ninth annual report of the Registrar-General in England, in which there were some interesting figures which went to show that the value of the emigrants who had left England was estimated at about £159 per head—men, women, and children. He did not think they would be of nearly the same value in this colony; a great deal depended upon the class of immigrants brought here, and also upon the way they were treated when they arrived in the colony; but he held that if encouragement was given to the farming classes who were brought out to settle upon the land, immigration would not prove unproductive. But their full value was not to be realised by the present system adopted by the Government of bringing out immigrants and following them with loans of money for the purpose of employing them here. He could not see that such a system as that would do much for the colony, or assist to develop it in any way; they would never by that system raise up a strong and prosperous colony. It was all very well to borrow money in England just to tide over times of depression; but they had been living on the loans obtained from England for the last seven or eight years; and every time there was a slight depression in trade in the colony, there was a continual crying out for more loans and more public works; and all the while this system of borrowing money and spending it on public works was really hindering the progress of the colony rather than pushing it forward. Loans might be all very well as a stimulant; they acted upon the colony, politically, something the same as a stimulant did physically; but who would think of living altogether upon stimulants? He knew that there were some men who did so, and, although they might look well and hearty, their appearance was very deceptive and they were not strong or healthy. In the same way, if they kept on continually borrowing money, they should find that as soon as their opportunities of borrowing ceased, then the colony would fail. With regard to the railways, the Treasurer claimed this as one of the items that would be reproductive; but he certainly thought that many of the lines proposed by the Government for construc-

tion would not prove reproductive. It was proposed that the sum of £2,024,000 was to be spent in this way, and principally upon the extension of lines into the interior. The Minister for Works endeavoured to show that these lines would pay interest and working expenses; but although the figures appeared satisfactory in themselves, he did not think they would be satisfactory to the taxpayers of the colony. The hon. gentleman went into figures to show that if they could get a certain number of sheep out into the western country, the wool alone from those sheep, being brought down by our railways, would go a long way to pay interest and working expenses; and he calculated that if they started at 3,000,000 sheep, in five years, with one-third increase, they would have that number in the western country. Was it at all likely that they would have five prosperous seasons one after another that would give a clear increase to the pastoral lessees of one-third of their sheep every year? This had a great deal to do with the question of railways, because the Minister for Works based his calculations on the probable increase of sheep to prove that the railway would pay. It had, however, never been known in the colony that sheep would increase one-third, after deducting fat and culls disposed of, for five years consecutively. The hon. gentleman seemed to have forgotten the two serious years from which the colony had lately suffered, and that they would considerably reduce the increase of the three years previously. The hon. gentleman's estimates were not at all likely to be realised. He adduced as an argument in his favour the railway to the Downs; but that was rather an unfortunate selection, as it was well known that although there was as good a case made out for the construction of that line when it was first started as there could possibly be for a railway to the far west, the Southern and Western Railway did not pay its working expenses or interest on the cost of construction for many years. The hon. gentleman himself said that for many years after it was built the working expenses had to be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue. Yet the Downs gave fair promise of being as large a pastoral district as ever the western country was likely to be; and if that railway had not turned out satisfactorily, what encouragement was there to go further into the colony with railway extension? It was well known that the Southern and Western Railway never approached paying one-half of the interest on its cost of construction until there was a large agricultural settlement along it. It was the passenger traffic which had considerably augmented the receipts, and had enabled the line to pay the interest. Even supposing there was

land in the western district as suitable for close settlement as had been stated by the Premier, it was not at all likely that agricultural settlement would ever be induced there; because it would not pay to send down agricultural produce. It might pay to send down wool by railway; but it was not at all probable that it would pay to bring down wheat. There was a great difference in the cost of those products; but there was a very small difference in the cost of freight, and therefore, whilst it might pay to send down wool, it would not induce an agricultural population to settle in those western districts with the idea of sending their produce to market. He had heard that that part of the country was not suitable for agriculture. It was not very long ago since he had some correspondence with a gentleman in Victoria who had been living in the district, and, from the description he gave of the dryness of the climate there, anyone who attempted to go in for agriculture would most miserably fail. Another case had come under his knowledge of a cattle-drover who took up cattle and travelled along the beds of some dry western creeks. That person three years afterwards, on going over the same country, found that the tracks of his cattle made three years previously were not obliterated, which clearly showed the scarcity of rain. Although the railway scheme of the Government was comprehensive, and although the lines it was proposed to be commenced were numerous, there was one left out which should have stood at the head of the list, and he quite agreed with the hon. member for Ipswich, who stated that that should have been the first to have been commenced—he referred to the extension of the Southern and Western Railway from Oxley to South Brisbane, or to deep-water, where it would offer facilities for the export of coal. The Treasurer gave as his reason for not placing this line on the Estimates that it would not encourage the exportation of coal because the coal was not of a quality fit for exportation. That statement was certainly contradicted by Mr. Gregory, in whose opinion hon. members should have every confidence. In his evidence before the Royal Commission appointed in 1877, that gentleman very plainly contradicted such a statement. As far as the coal seams were concerned, in the immediate neighbourhood of Ipswich, Mr. Gregory said that the coal was of such a friable nature that it would not fetch so much in a foreign market as it otherwise would do, but he also stated that further on in the district the coal was so hard that it would bear any amount of knocking about. Part of Mr. Gregory's evidence was given with reference to the coal beyond Walloon and towards Warwick, which he said was

of a firm character, and possessed resistant powers against the effects of either water or weather to such an extent as to make it a valuable coal to be used by ships at sea. Mr. Gregory said it would not break up into small pieces; that, in short, its mechanical properties made it very useful for steam fuel. This did not bear out the statement made by the Treasurer, the other night. Although the seams known around Ipswich at the time Mr. Gregory gave his evidence were of this friable nature, there had been several found since which had been referred to by the member for Ipswich as having produced coal of an extremely hard character; and he (Mr. Grimes) might add to the testimony already given by that hon. member, that the coal referred to was of very excellent quality and suitable for steam purposes. This firm had tried several trucks full in their establishment for steaming, and it was everything that could be desired. Thus, the excuse given by the Treasurer for not placing this small extension on the list of branch railways was a very poor one. Although the extension from Oxley to South Brisbane was not on the Estimates, there was a sum nearly twice as much as would be required put down for a line from Burrum to Maryborough. He did not know whether the extent of the coalfields in the Burrum district would warrant the hon. gentleman in placing that sum on the Estimates, nor did he think the quality of the coal there was sufficient. Mr. Gregory, in his report of the Burrum coal, did not speak of it being of such a high quality, or of the extent of the coalfields being so large as to warrant a railway being made there. That gentleman gave the extent of what he considered payable coalfields already known in that district at 22,000 acres; but what was that compared with the report of the extent of the coalfields in West Moreton? In answer to a question as to what was the extent of the coalfield beyond Walloon, Mr. Gregory said—

“I would hardly separate it by limiting it to the Moreton district, but, taking a space of five miles along the railway line, it is one series of coal beds from ten miles of Ipswich up to Warwick, and the seams run directly under the Main Range, appearing again on the Downs. It is therefore difficult to pronounce exactly upon the number of seams on either side of the Range; but taking what I have examined along the railway line, there would be, within five miles of the railway, at least 100 square miles of available coal. Of course, the coalfield is very much larger than that if you go further from the line. There are many seams of coal in this series; I have not ascertained as yet how many, but know as many as four or five that may be thick enough to work. The principal seam is frequently nine feet in thickness. I think we may safely say that over the whole 100 square miles we have at least three feet

thick of coal that might be turned out, and that would give very nearly 3,000,000 tons to the square mile; or, if we allowed for leaving coal for pillars for supporting the roofs of the mines, &c., we should get 1,500,000 tons per square mile. There is plenty of space for extension beyond the limits I have given, so that for all practical purposes we may say that these coal beds are inexhaustible.”

He (Mr. Grimes) was surprised, after such an opinion as that given by so competent an authority, that the Treasurer should think it worth while to place on the Estimates a sum of money for eighteen miles of railway from Burrum to Maryborough, and should not, at the same time, think that the coalfields in the West Moreton district were worthy of an extension of seven miles of railway. He did not object to the development of the Burrum coalfield, as he considered they should do everything they could to encourage industries of that kind, for there were few industries which would give more employment to men than the coal trade. There was an item of £100,000 on the Estimates to meet expenditure in connection with road boards and shire councils. It was rather astonishing to see how often the Divisional Boards Bill cropped up in debates like the present, but it was so intimately connected with the question before the House that it was difficult to avoid reference to it. One member of the Government drew a comparison between that Bill and the Local Government Act of the late Government, and stated that there had been a fine chance for him to have got up an agitation outside against the Local Government Bill had he chosen to do so; but if the hon. gentleman had made such an attempt he would have failed, for although some of the provisions in the Local Government Act might be very similar to those in the Divisional Boards Bill, there was one distinguishing feature in the former that would have prevented any agitation against it outside, and that was that it was not compulsory; whereas the Divisional Boards Bill would be compulsory, and the farmers and others felt that, as they were not forced to form themselves under the Local Government Act, they could leave it alone. But how different had it been with the Divisional Boards Bill. There had been petitions from almost every electorate in the colony against it, and public meetings held in almost every district, at which resolutions were carried disapproving of it. It had been stated by the Minister for Works that those meetings were got up by discharged road parties, assisted by members of the Opposition. If that was true, it was very strange that petitions should have been sent from places where such a pressure could not possibly have been brought to bear. For instance, no one would suppose that the

member for Blackall was acting under the pressure of discharged road-parties when he presented a petition against the Bill, or that the Treasurer himself who had presented a petition against the Bill was influenced by road-parties in his district—unless, indeed, it was that the hon. gentleman wanted an excuse for withdrawing his Bill, or for letting it be slaughtered among the innocents at the end of the session. The Minister for Works made a most unwarrantable statement, as there was not the least ground for supposing that either the discharged road-parties; or members of the Opposition, had fomented the opposition against the Bill which had been shown in almost every part of the colony. The crying injustice of the Bill was quite sufficient to produce that without any assistance from road-parties or anybody else. It had been stated that the Colonial Treasurer placed this £100,000 on his estimates to gild the pill; but he (Mr. Grimes) did not think the hon. gentleman would find that that would pay, as the composition of the party who had been trying to force the Bill on the country was quite enough to cause it to be very chary and very suspicious of it. One prominent member of the Government, when addressing his constituents, boasted that he had not a single foot of land in the whole colony, and he (Mr. Grimes) heard another hon. member say that he did not own an acre of land in Queensland, and that if anything happened he could take up his bed and walk. The same remarks might apply to many others on the Government side of the House, whose names he (Mr. Grimes) did not believe appeared on any deed in the Registrar-General's Office. That being the case, was it likely that a measure of this kind would not be received kindly by those hon. members who supported the Government from the back benches? But there was a little more which might be said about this item of £100,000 for road boards. He considered it would be unwise to place such a large amount of patronage at the disposal of any Ministry. Those who had read the Divisional Boards Bill would see that the first boards were to be nominee boards appointed by the Executive Council, and those nominee boards were to have this £100,000 placed in their hands to do as they liked with it. Thus a large amount of patronage would be placed at the disposal of the Ministry of the day—an amount which the House was not warranted in placing in their hands. The moneys that had been spent on the roads formerly had been voted for specific roads by the House, and for nothing else; but it would be very different with this £100,000. It was not advisable to place so much patronage in the hands of any Ministry as this item of £100,000, and several other items on the Estimates would. Every

conscientious Minister who desired to carry out fair and square and impartially the duties of his office would rather that this responsibility was not placed on his shoulders. A good deal of influence was often brought to bear on Ministers by constituencies, and, possibly, by members of Parliament; and he was supported in this view by some correspondence which had lately appeared in the *Courier* from an elector of the Burnett, who said it was difficult to understand why the Burnett should be so scurvily treated by the McIlwraith Government, when its vote had been at the disposal of his party for many years, and that their former member, Mr. Ivory, was Mr. McIlwraith's trusty henchman, and the gentleman who now held the seat had so far voted steadily with the Government, while their share of the public expenditure had never exceeded an annual road vote of a few hundreds. He (Mr. Grimes) would not say that the Premier would be disposed to bestow such favours as were hinted at, because of the hon. member's support, nor would the member for the Burnett himself receive them on such grounds; but the correspondence supported him (Mr. Grimes) in his theory that pressure was put on Ministers to spend money in various electorates. Responsibilities of this kind should be taken from the Government of the day. If the Divisional Boards Bill came before the House he would be willing to assist to alter it, so that the onus of appointing the first boards in each district should not rest on the Government, but should be borne by the electors of the district, and also that the first endowment should be rateably apportioned according to the amounts usually put on the Estimates for that electorate. There was a sum of £20,000 for main roads to goldfields. The Government should encourage in every way they could the gold-mining industry, which produced one of their principal exports. Gold-mining in a great many instances was the pioneer of settlement, and the industry was a great support to this colony; he therefore had no objection that a fair amount of money should be spent on roads to goldfields, so as to encourage this enterprise. Still, while gold-mining should be remembered, too much burden should not be placed on agriculturists. There was £10,000 for defences of the colony, which would be almost useless expenditure. They had no reason to fear any invasion from any nation. If there were such occurrence it would be better to prevent attack rather than resist it; and if England were engaged in hostilities with another power, let them know it would not be worth their while to send a squadron, or even one vessel, if they knew how little was to be obtained by so doing—that we were not worth powder and shot.

Mr. HORWITZ said it was his intention to oppose the votes for branch lines as well as trunk lines, and his reason for doing so was that there were no plans on the table. He was inclined to think that many of the mistakes of the past had arisen from being too hasty in commencing lines, and that much ought to have been saved, not alone in miles, but in money. In the construction of the Warwick-Stanthorpe line there was one section where the line needlessly went round some two miles, and for that the country had paid £18,000. Before voting for any new lines they should certainly see the plans. There was no amount on the Estimates for surveys, and it would be high time to vote the money for these lines when they were surveyed. He did not oppose the vote for lines already under construction. Before commenting on the Warwick-Killarney line he might say he was well acquainted with the district, but he wanted to see the plans. If the line were made to Killarney—a distance of twenty miles direct—he should oppose it. The only way to make the line from Warwick to Killarney payable was to take it round the farming districts, which would extend its length to twenty-five or twenty-six miles. Unless that were done he should vote against the item, although the proposed line was in his own district. It was not his intention to vote for any of the trunk lines. As to some of the lines which were estimated to cost £2,500 a mile, he felt certain that before they were finished they would cost at least £6,000 a mile. It would be very unwise to commence all the lines at once, and if the Premier had come down with three lines instead of ten it would have been quite sufficient, along with the continuation of the lines already authorised. If all the proposed lines were gone on with simultaneously, the Colonial Treasurer would be compelled within twelve months to ask for fresh taxes; he would have to increase the *ad valorem* duties to 10 or 15 per cent., and also to put on a land-tax. There was already a deficiency of £200,000; and before the year expired it might amount to half a million, and with our small revenue nothing but additional taxation could make up the deficiency. He would suggest that before the proposed trunk lines were made, two or three miles of land on either side of them should be reserved. With regard to the trunk lines, his idea was that the squatters did not want railways so long as their runs were left alone; and certainly if those lines were made it would be necessary to tax their land to the extent of at least 10s. per square mile extra. He thought the squatters would be quite satisfied to do without a railway for the next five or ten years. He would not detain the House longer, as

enough time had been wasted over the question; but he had thought it necessary to refer briefly to a few facts with which he was acquainted within his own district.

Mr. STUBLEY said he absolutely intended to do what he threatened last night—namely, to do everything in his power to obstruct the Government business, owing to the most uncourteous manner in which he was dealt with by the Premier. If the Premier had merely said he could not grant his request he (Mr. Stubbley) would have been perfectly satisfied. Not only would he do all he personally could to obstruct the Government business, but he would do all he could with the organisation of his party; and, if the present leader of the Opposition was not the man to come to the front and do it, he (Mr. Stubbley) would, and he thought he could get three or four hon. members to assist him in his work of obstruction. He wanted either to force the Government to go to the country—from which they were not likely to return—or else to allow the Opposition to put their policy through for them in a proper manner, as had been the case with every measure passed during this session. With reference to his speech last night, he was wrongly reported, although that did not trouble him; and, if hon. members thought he was now speaking to his constituents they were mistaken, for he was not dependent one way or the other on them. What he said last night was that the Government could not construct a railway three miles out of Charters Towers for £5,000 a mile; and in saying that he did not allude to the line from Townsville to Charters Towers, as reported. To talk about making a railway 130 miles west of Charters Towers was a beautiful way of wasting the money of the northern people. Who was the man that had dared to telegraph to Cooktown that they were to get £60,000? The Minister for Works promised him that he would put £20,000 on the Estimates for the different goldfields of the colony. Was it all to go to the Cook district, and was the hon. member for the Kennedy to be left out in the cold?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had never promised the hon. member anything.

Mr. STUBLEY said he must speak truths because he did not know how to speak anything else, and he would repeat that the Minister for Works promised him from the Treasury benches that he would put £20,000 on the Estimates for roads to the goldfields, and he then challenged him, as he did now, that he would stake his seat in the House if any single mining district in the colony would not prefer having £1,000 spent on the mines to £3,000 on the roads. The Cook district was a block of about 200 miles square, and he was certain the people there would far rather not have the 130 miles of

railway west of Charters Towers if they could have substituted for it a line from Cooktown or Port Douglas to the Palmer. There was a possibility of such a line paying interest on the amount expended upon it—which could not be said of the proposed extensions of the three trunk lines, the northern one especially. There was never a greater absurdity than the proposal to construct 130 miles of railway from Charters Towers to the west, and he did not think the Government ever seriously intended to construct it. If the proposal had been to construct a line to Hughenden he would not have voted against it; but he should oppose the extension of the line to the centre of barren ranges where even sheep could not live. The Government would have four years in which to construct those lines, during which time the interest would have to be paid year by year, and at the end of four years they might find that a further extension would be necessary to make the line of any use to either squatters or farmers. The squatters should be granted a more secure tenure, so that they would spend money on the land and have the right to take up a certain portion of it after a time. The squatting interest was the primary industry in Australia, and always had been; and what benefited the squatter benefited also the country. The digger and the squatter should go hand-in-hand as the pioneers of the country, and farmers, miners, and squatters should always work together. He was not opposed to the borrowing of money, which would be very useful to the colony in many ways; but he strongly objected to the way in which it was proposed to expend this loan. The Colonial Secretary and the Colonial Treasurer both stated that the loan would last over from three to four years; but the Government had no right to pledge the country to borrow only three millions during that period. The country might take a most prosperous turn during the next year, and it might be desirable to float a loan for five millions. Why, then, should the colony be bound down by a pledge not to borrow more than a certain amount? The Colonial Treasurer would not show himself to be a more truthful man by pledging the country to borrow only three millions for four years than he would appear if he said, "We want to borrow one million this year; we don't know what we may want next year." As it was, he was simply saying that the country would not be able in the future to afford to borrow more than a certain amount—a matter about which he could know nothing. They had heard a good deal about a line to Charters Towers, but if any such line was in existence it had been constructed since he was in that district; and if the rest were to be like that they would not be remunerative in any way whatever. With

regard to the Southern line, if the proposition had been to carry it to Mitchell, about thirty or forty miles from the present terminus, where there was some good country, he should have been quite satisfied to vote for it. He should also be prepared to vote for branch lines in the central division to Clermont, believing they would pay. The proposed extension of the line from Charters Towers might be shortened by 100 or 90 miles, and the money devoted to the construction of a line from the Cook district to the Palmer. That expenditure might take the place of the £60,000 about which so much had been said. If it were proposed to construct that line in the Cook district through land likely to pay for agricultural or mining purposes he should vote for it, not because it would be profitable at the present time, but because it would be more likely to pay interest on the cost of construction than would the proposed extension from Charters Towers westward. On that account he considered that the Cook district, notwithstanding the Macrossan phalanx, had not received justice. They had certainly got a plum in the shape of £60,000. When in the North, the Minister for Works stated that he voted according to a certain arrangement the particulars of which he would not give. The hon. member said that he knew perfectly well that the Government, although they had promised these boons to the North, never had the slightest intention of fulfilling their promises. The programme before the country was to borrow money. He would vote for that being done; but he was opposed to the money being wasted, as it would be by the construction of the different works named in the programme. He was satisfied that the Central division were prepared to let their works stand. He was also satisfied that the Southern division, after they had got an extension of twenty or thirty miles, would be content to let their works stand; and he was sure that all the Kennedy district wanted was to have the railway to Charters Towers. When it was decided to extend that line, it should be to Hughenden, or some other settled place; the railway should not be left between two centres of population. It had been mentioned by several hon. members that the Government could or would increase the revenue by the extra taxation, or extra rent, that would be derived from runs; but he distinctly denied that this could be done. He believed it would be proved before October that nearly one-half of the colony at present held under lease would be thrown up. People would not continue to pay rents for back blocks or dry blocks of country. Out of nearly £600 worth of country that he held this year he should give up £200 worth, and he should be very glad if any hon. member opposite would

come and take it up; if he did so, he would not give him dry blocks but water frontage. If hon. members opposite would be candid they would also acknowledge that they would be prepared to throw up a great portion of their country. How, therefore, was extra rent to be raised? The hon. member for Maryborough, some time ago, said it was possible to make pastoral lessees pay an additional price for their holdings, but he (Mr. Stubbley) maintained it was not; even supposing stock were saleable, it would not be possible to make the pastoral lessees pay more for their holdings. The only way to make them do so was by getting more competition, because there were very few squatters who had not runs sufficient to carry from two to ten times more stock than they had. If they were to be charged more rent without being subject to competition, they would simply throw up half the country they now held, and no increase of revenue could therefore be expected by those means. Next year the rent for runs would not come to half the amount now received, for he believed that one-third of the colony would be thrown up. Moreover, why should the rent of pastoral lessees be increased because there was a depression in the colony? Why should they attempt to charge them more without giving them better security? Give the pastoral lessees better security and then an increased rental might be charged. He, for one, was prepared to pay twice as much for his runs if he could obtain security of tenure for say twenty years. He was not advocating the squatting interest specially, but what he believed to be necessary and of advantage to the country. As matters were at present the pastoral lessees could not depend for a moment upon their runs. They could not safely expend £50 in building a dam, for they did not know the moment that it might be taken from them by means of selection; and under those circumstances no increase of revenue could be expected from pastoral land. They must look somewhere else to raise the interest upon the proposed loan. He had been very glad to hear the Minister for Works declare that he was opposed to "bunching" railways; but he was astonished to hear the Colonial Treasurer say, in effect, that because the late Government had done certain things, he could not be blamed for following in their footsteps. He (Mr. Stubbley) had come to the House prepared to do his best for the good of the country, according to his knowledge; and he held that the House was not returned to be led by the precedents established by the late Government. The Colonial Treasurer had, however, gone further. He had said to him distinctly that he ousted the late Government on the principle contained in

his scheme for railways and a three-million loan, and that he was now carrying out a policy similar to the one advocated by the late Government. He (Mr. Stubbley) would not pledge himself to the country to do certain things, and when he came back to the House carry out exactly the reverse; for there was no principle shown in such conduct. Members of the Government had said that they were prepared to construct the trunk line extensions for £3,000 per mile. What did they mean by that? Were they prepared to guarantee that the lines would be completed for that amount? Were they prepared in any form to secure the country against a greater cost than £3,000 a-mile? He said they were not—that they could not do it. If they were prepared to call for tenders for these lines, and to say that they would not accept any tender over £3,000 per mile, he would be prepared to go with them and support them, but they were not prepared to do so; and yet they had the impudence to come down to the House and say the lines would not cost more than £3,000 per mile. They were not prepared to do a really legitimate business—that was the fact of it. They were not game to do what he proposed, and for what reason? Because they had got a sort of force behind them: but they knew it would not stand—that they would not be there all through the session. They knew that some hon. members would have to clear out and go to their constituencies, or go home, and do all sorts of things; they were afraid that they would lose ground, but if they were prepared to pledge themselves that they would not accept any tender more than £3,000 per mile he would go with them and assist them, and do even more than that. If any of those hon. members wished to leave those benches for any reasonable or justifiable cause he was prepared to go away with them, but he should not go as long as they were there. The Minister for Works had made the most astounding statement he had ever heard. He had known that gentleman long and had the greatest respect for him, although he had tried his very utmost to injure him (Mr. Stubbley) at his election—without being ungentlemanly—he would say that of the hon. gentleman. They had been mates together and partners and friends, and, in fact, the first dispute or row he got into in the colony was over that gentleman, who now had the impudence to come to the House and assert that these railway extensions would not cost the taxpayers of the country a single penny more. He (Mr. Stubbley) would like to know how and where the hon. gentleman was going to obtain the means of paying the interest on this money without charging the taxpayers of the colony a single penny? He defied him to construct a single mile, which was a very

small item out of 400, without imposing additional taxation to pay the interest. Even without constructing a single pound's worth of work, but letting it stand still, he could not do it. If they constructed these £3,000 per mile railways through country that was settled and had a large population, there might be some possibility of doing it, but not otherwise—it was utterly impossible. While on that matter, he might as well say that the Minister for Works came to that House as an advocate for the diggers and mining men, but he had now become the advocate of the squatters—the very men he opposed most bitterly when he first entered the House. Where the hon. gentleman got his experience from he (Mr. Stubbley) could not understand. He now stood up and asserted that the squatters paid the interest on all the money borrowed for the construction of railways in this colony, but he (Mr. Stubbley) would like to see that proved. If the rental of the squatters' runs paid the interest on the cost of construction of all the railways in this colony, what became of the rest of the money—where did it go to? He was sorry that the hon. member had made such an assertion. If he tried to make them believe that black was white and white black, he would find he was very much mistaken. He (Mr. Stubbley) was prepared to go in for a loan—he did not care whether it was for one million, or five millions, or ten—but he would not be a party to pledging the country to an unlimited amount. He was satisfied to go in for a loan if they deducted only two items from the list—that was to say, that they should not construct the Southern or the Central extension until they got the Charters Towers line constructed. They should then be on an even footing and start fair together. Another most extraordinary principle had been put forward by the hon. Minister for Works, who said that money was borrowed to construct public works, and that by so doing a large amount of labour was brought into the colony, and that the very taxation put on the men so imported would repay the country for the money it borrowed. He should be prepared to go with the hon. gentleman if that could be done, as the principle was a good one. Then it had been stated that more money would be got from the railways because they were not to cost more than £3,000 a-mile; but he failed to see how that would be worked out, because, if railways did not pay now, how would they pay when taken into a part of the country where there was only one man to every five men in the settled district? They did not want those trunk lines, and as long as he was in the House they should not be made if he could help it. He was perfectly willing to borrow money, but not for the

construction of railways that would be of no possible benefit to the country. Rather than do that it would be better to adopt the suggestion of the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas), and borrow the money and divide it amongst themselves. He would be quite willing to vote money for a line from Cooktown. There was a possibility of extending a line from Port Douglas and making it pay, as there was an immense area—200 square miles to his knowledge—of auriferous country in that district. There was a chance of making such a line a success; but supposing it was not, he should be satisfied, as it would afford great facilities to the miners. What were Ballarat or Stawell, in Victoria, when compared with the Palmer or the Hodgkinson goldfields? A person could ride the whole day, or seventy miles in one direction, and, unless he was following the bed of a river, he could not go three miles without crossing a good quartz reef. So that there would be some possibility of such a line becoming remunerative. Another argument of the Minister for Works was that the country was suffering from an overplus of fat stock; but what it was really suffering from was a market for that stock. Referring again to railways, the Government had promised that the proposed trunk lines should not cost more than £3,000 a-mile;—if they were prepared to pledge themselves to that, and to say that they would not accept any tender over £3,000 a-mile, he should be prepared to assist them in getting their loan for these lines, although they would be useless for a time. The hon. Treasurer went beyond all bounds in some of the arguments he used. The hon. gentleman was not satisfied with any reasonable project, but he must get up and assert that the construction of these lines would have the effect of increasing the number of sheep in the colony. Did the hon. member mean by that, that he would stock all the northern country himself, for there was not another gentleman in the colony in a position to do it? Let them look at the thing practically. It was well known that the number of sheep had fallen off during the last four years, year by year, notwithstanding the extension of railway; that decrease was not altogether due to droughts but to the squatters having replaced sheep with cattle. There were nearly two million less sheep now than there were three years ago, and he would ask how they were going to increase the number to such an extent as to make them pay the cost of these extensions? Supposing such a thing was possible, how would matters stand? The railway would take three years, at least, to construct, and then it would take three years more to make the increase of sheep; and thus, presuming the wool market was good in England, at the

end of six years there might possibly be some such increase in the number of sheep as was anticipated by the hon. gentleman. For his own information he would like to know how they were going to make the country better, and how they expected to get their money cheaper in England by asking for three millions with a pledge not to borrow any more for the next four years? He did not know how it could be done himself; for, if he went to a bank it was more likely he would get a thousand pounds, than three times the amount, on the understanding he borrowed no more for four years. The leader of the Opposition had done much for the other side by putting the Government measures into reasonable form, Government being unable to do it themselves, contenting themselves with being ready with the voting power when it was wanted. The Government were afraid to go to the country. There were two Ministers who could not get a seat—the Postmaster-General and the Attorney-General—and it was even doubtful if any one of the Government could, except, perhaps, the Treasurer. It was also a standing and abominable disgrace that for political purposes the plaintiff in the case of “*Macdonald v. Tully*,” had been kept out of money which had been awarded him by the judges, and to which he was honestly and fairly entitled. If Ministers thought they could get returned he would give any one of them a chance, and he challenged his colleague to resign with him and they would make the constituency a Government or an Opposition one. Further than that, the Government could not send a man to contest any populated district in the colony—except it might be somewhere like the Barcoo—and get him returned. But as it was they simply sat on the Government benches and said, “We have the force and we will squash you.” The Colonial Secretary had said they wanted the railways extended through the bad country over which the teams could not pass, but not beyond that, into the good country. He (Mr. Stubbley) agreed with him at the time that the lines should cross the bad country; but they did not want them to go further than that, because, if they did, the good country would be selected, and that would not suit the squatters. For himself he would be only too glad to see a few people come and select on his run, and not only would he pay their rent for three years but he would find them the stock as well. The Colonial Treasurer had remarked that at the present rate of expenditure they had only money enough to carry them on for a period of about eight months. Assuming that they had received expenditure in the North for three years, how much had been expended there?—and if the Government succeeded in obtaining their three-million loan, he wished to know when they would get their portion of it? He could not

see, however, where they were going to get the revenue to meet the interest on the loan. It could not be obtained from the resources of land revenue; and, if they attempted to sell the land, they would fail to make the required provision, because there was no money to be obtained for the purpose of buying land. It was utterly impossible while that lasted that they could raise the interest on the three millions. Under the circumstances, he therefore felt bound to vote against many of the items of the loan, and the loan itself as a whole. If the Government would give him any grounds to believe that they would not make all their lines before they knew something more definitely of how they were going to provide for the interest, he might be inclined to assist in borrowing some money for a particular purpose. He was prepared to give them a trial of 200 miles of line which would pay far better than those mentioned in the estimate, if the Government were prepared to accept his terms.

Mr. O’SULLIVAN said the hon. member (Mr. Stubbley) had spoken for nearly two hours, and a greater exhibition no man had ever made of himself in the House. He had followed the hon. member very closely, and the only point he could pick out of the speech was that the hon. member had a good opinion of himself and that nobody else had. The hon. member reminded him of Solomon’s saying—that a fool might be considered wise if he would only hold his tongue. He felt deeply for the Speaker, who was obliged to sit and listen to such rubbish as they had just heard. He had always been, and still was, friendly-inclined towards the hon. member, believing that he would make a good member, but the exhibition he had made of himself to-night and last night had greatly lowered him in his estimation. He was inclined to look upon the hon. member kindly, seeing that he was returned for such a fine district, and by such a large majority over one of the ablest men in the colony. The speech of the Minister for Works the other night was, in the opinion of those able to judge, one of the best Ministerial speeches ever delivered in this Chamber. He did not say that with the object of flattering the Minister for Works, but he was reminded of it by the flea-bite of the hon. member who had just sat down—which also reminded him of a very pointed saying of Moore when Leigh Hunt had written something against Byron after the latter’s death. The difference in mind between the hon. member (Mr. Stubbley) and the Minister for Works was as the difference between a stagnant water-hole and the ocean, or between the Main Range and an ant-hill. He (Mr. O’Sullivan) was under the impression that all the squatters were on this side of the House, but a more ultra-

squatting speech than that just delivered he had never heard in Parliament. The speech of the hon. member possessed three excellent qualities—it was most absurd, and it displayed great brass and great ignorance. He would inform the hon. member that the quality of a speech was not measured, as Byron measured kisses, by its length. The test of a good speech was quality, not quantity, and as far as he could judge, the hon. member was one of those who could say more in ten minutes than in ten hours. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) dared say he was tarred with the same brush, but he could say that a little reticence in a new member was always commendable. He practised that when he first came into the House, and it was three or four months before he ventured to speak, and then his knees shook under him; and that was a weakness he had not yet been able to shake off whenever he addressed the House. It would be a saving of time and money if all the speaking on great questions was left to two or three of the leading members on either side, for after they had finished—and they were, no doubt, the ablest men in the House—there was very little else left to be said. Hon. members who spoke afterwards were only wasting the time of the House and putting the country to the expense of printing their speeches. Independent members, who had not the responsibility of the leaders, could always make their little Sunday speeches by putting a bit of a notice of motion on the paper, if they wanted to see their names in *Hansard* occasionally. Although it was, as he had said, a waste of time to follow the leaders of both sides, yet, as the thing had gone so far, he would like to record his ideas on the matter in dispute. Previously, whenever a question had been debated, and the division taken, it was supposed the question was done with; but since the present session opened, scarcely a week or a fortnight had passed without something like a want of confidence motion being brought forward. The Opposition kept crying out that the people were being driven out of the colony; but, if the Government had been allowed to go on with the work of the session, it would have been finished by this time; all the required money would have been granted, and every idle man in the colony would be at work. Who had driven the people out of the colony? When the Ministry came into office they inherited a deficit of £240,000 or £250,000, and they were compelled to dismiss the drones and the people who were not wanted. There was plenty of room for the re-employment of the latter. There was plenty of work in the colony, but no money; and the Government could not get it. Something or other cropped up every night to waste valuable time. Supposing every hon. member chose to

speak for two hours on every question—and they all had an equal right with the hon. member for Kennedy to occupy two hours of the time of the House—no question would ever be concluded. Considering the number of members, ten minutes or a-quarter of an hour was enough for anybody but the leaders on both sides, to whom greater latitude would necessarily be allowed. As to the question before the House, the Loan Estimate was exactly like that which the present Premier brought before the House last year, and which he (Mr. O'Sullivan) supported, believing that it was too small, and being willing to support it if it had been double the amount. In a young colony like this it was necessary to borrow money. He had been immensely surprised at the speech of the hon. member for Toowoomba, who not only voted for the three-million loan on the previous occasion, but made one of the ablest speeches in its favour. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) voted for the loan on that occasion on the same principle on which he voted for it now—namely, that he wished the country to be opened up for settlement. On the same principle he voted for the Railway Reserves Bill when it first came on; but when he found that it would have no such effect, and that they would have to give the same notice of resumption as they gave to the squatters whose land was not affected by it, he voted against it. He was perfectly consistent, as his object both then and now was to open up the country. The inside country was now well settled, but the people had families, and in a few years their children would be grown up and would be wanting land of their own. If the lands in the west were thrown open they would go out there, and the proper way to throw that land open was to construct those trunk lines. He would read a part of the speech delivered by the hon. member for Toowoomba on the occasion of the present Premier proposing the £3,000,000 loan last year. The hon. member was then disputing with the present hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas), who was then Premier. The latter insisted upon the sale of land by auction, and the hon. member (Mr. Groom) opposed that plan. He said—

"The hon. the Premier, in addressing the House the other evening, said it was not the intention of the Government to extend lines of railways into the interior of the country, except on the principle that those who were benefited by those sales should pay for them, either by forced sales of land or by an adjustment of territorial taxation. Those were, he believed, the hon. gentleman's words. The hon. gentleman was also pleased to say that he had copied the system from the hon. the Speaker, and that it was when travelling in America he was convinced of the great good which resulted from the apportionment of land for the construction of railways."

The hon. member (Mr. Groom) then quoted an extract from the *New York Tribune*, a recognised authority among the American people, to show that the system of granting land was a complete swindle. He then went on to say—

“He entirely dissented from that doctrine of that hon. gentleman, and he would ask him to point out any other British colony or number of colonies where such a policy had been adopted or endorsed, and he would ask him if he had read, and read attentively, the speech delivered by Sir Hercules Robinson, at Bathurst, about two years ago, in reference to railway construction. His Excellency then drew attention to the snail's progress that had been made by all the colonies with railways, and pointed out the great necessity—especially in colonies like these, where there were few large navigable rivers—that existed for railways, in order to develop as far as possible the resources of the interior. There was not a word said by him or by the statesmen who followed him—Sir John Robertson or Sir Henry Parkes—about adopting the policy he (Mr. Douglas) now foreshadowed. If that principle was a good and sound one, as the hon. gentleman represented it to be, why did he not carry it out in every instance? Why was it not embodied in the railways already formulated and carried through the House? And why was it not proposed in connection with these branch railways, and why not declare that the districts benefited by those railways should be taxed for their construction?”

“AN HON. MEMBER: They are taxed; the land is sold.

“MR. GROOM said the land might be sold; but by whom had it been sold, and what had been done with the proceeds?”

“AN HON. MEMBER: The Toowoomba line.

“MR. GROOM said the Toowoomba line was constructed by loan, and not by sales of land. The interest had been derived partly from the proceeds of sales of land throughout the colony, not from any particular districts. * * * * If railways were to be constructed at all, his impression was that they should be carried out as they had always been hitherto in this colony—by borrowed capital. If hon. members turned to New South Wales and Victoria, they would see clearly that the more railways were extended into the interior the more remunerative they became. By this means the railways in Victoria now not only paid working expenses and interest on the original cost, but contributed a considerable sum to the general revenue—nearly a million sterling per annum. And in South Australia, to which the hon. gentleman sometimes referred as a model colony—and he (Mr. Groom) believed it had a model Premier—the policy adopted was to construct some twenty-two lines of railway; but was it said that the people of the district through which these lines passed should be taxed especially to pay the interest on the cost of construction? No; the principle held there was that all classes of the community must necessarily benefit by the construction of railways, and it was a sound principle. Would any member representing the city of Brisbane say that if our railways were carried into the remote and vast interior

which Sir Thomas Mitchell spoke of—that boundless and almost illimitable district so admirably adapted for pastoral purposes, and which, if they were to believe the gentleman recently speaking at a banquet at Aramac, was also admirably adapted for agricultural settlement—he asked would any hon. member dare to say that the city of Brisbane would not derive considerable benefit from the construction of that line?”

That was a better answer to the speech made by the hon. member to-night than any he (Mr. O'Sullivan) could make; and he was very sorry to hear the hon. member say now that he would oppose these extensions shilling by shilling. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) supported these propositions on the same grounds that he supported the proposal to borrow £3,000,000 last year, and he believed that the present Loan Estimates were exactly the same—with the exception, perhaps, of one or two items—as the Premier intended to propose when he brought forward his loan proposition last year. He was in favour of the extensions because they would throw open the land, but he would not consent to the extension of the lines unless there was a prospect that settlement would follow. The hon. member was mistaken when he said that the construction of the first railway line was the cause of the crisis of 1866. That crisis, like a tidal wave, passed over the world, but this colony could have surmounted it better than any other colony if the lands along the sections opened up had been thrown open for selection. At that time there were a great number of navvies who would have taken up land had there been any obtainable; but as there was not they spent their money, in many cases foolishly, and left the country. There being no place for them to settle in they took up their swags and went elsewhere. When railways were once started there should always be employment to keep the people in the colony if possible. He was sorry to hear the hon. member (Mr. Groom) say that the Government banking arrangements had caused the ruin of a certain gentleman; but as he would not give the name of the bank nor of the individual the hon. member must excuse him for doubting the assertion. Probably the statement was a flower of his fancy—people were sometimes carried away by their imagination. The hon. member evidently attached great importance to his words when he said he was afraid to say too much lest there should be a panic in the colony; and it was satisfactory to know the hon. member had been merciful and refrained from creating a panic. After the arguments of the hon. member which he had read, he was sorry to hear the hon. member say that the proposal was one no common-sense business man would accept. Nothing could be lost

by improving the country, and the best proof of that statement was the hon. member's own speech. Before the railway was started to the Darling Downs the average price of land there was only 5s. per acre, whereas it now averaged from £3 to £5 per acre. In a petition lately presented it was stated that a great deal of the Allora exchange land was worth £10 per acre, so that £5 an acre all round on the Darling Downs might be considered a fair average. If the extension of lines westward increased the value of land there at only half or quarter that rate, they would not only pay interest but would also enrich the country, drawing capital from all the world into it. It would ill become him, after the lecture he had administered to the Minister for Works, to speak much longer himself. He agreed with his colleague that a twelve-miles branch line to Highfields would be of little use, and that the Government might as well keep the money. The country in that direction was a timber country, and he believed that people when they put their timber on the drays would not think it worth their while to take it off again, timber not being a nice article to load or unload, but would carry it all the way to Toowoomba, if the line was not taken further than twelve miles from town. The Government might as well carry the line as far as Crow's Nest; it would then go to a great centre, and would tap as fine a timber country as there was in Queensland. This was a small matter which would, no doubt be cured. He agreed, also, with the hon. member (Mr. Thompson) in his remarks with regard to the coal traffic. Nothing would increase the traffic more on these lines than the short line named—it was only seven miles long. He believed that the extra traffic would pay the interest in one year. The hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) had mentioned, the other evening, that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) went with him to a coal-pit on Moggill Creek. He thought it a handsome and nice pit, and he saw large lumps of coal which seemed to him to be very sound. There was a coal seam all along there. The other day Mr. Thomas, a responsible man, told him that he promised to guarantee the interest on the money required to build a short line to the coal-pits where they were at work. This guarantee was a good one, and the Government would be quite safe in accepting it. Mr. Thomas was so confident in the matter that he would stand the cost of the line himself if time only were given him to pay. The owners of coal-pits in the district were terribly in earnest, and a little line to enable them to bring their coal to deep-water should be one of the first that the Government should undertake, seeing there was a perfect guarantee it would pay. The matter was very cold until the hon. member

(Mr. Thompson) spoke about it; his words had great weight, and he was sure that it would not now be lost sight of, and that both sides of the House would be agreed upon it.

Mr. MOREHEAD did not know that he should have spoken at all in the debate, but for the hon. member for Kennedy's unfair attack on *Hansard*. Every hon. member of the House must be aware under what extraordinary circumstances the hon. member made a speech last night—a speech which he had, to a certain extent, repeated that evening. The speech that he had delivered that evening was not prepared by himself, but by a member of the staff of one of the leading journals in Brisbane. With all due regard to the hon. member's ability, he (Mr. Morehead) would not believe—unless he saw him write it out himself—that the hon. member was capable of making such a speech, and he had good external evidence that it was not evolved out of his inner consciousness. To leave him alone, however—and he thought he was worth leaving alone, not in an ordinary, but an extraordinary sense—the question arose, was there to be any finality to this system of debating? The question was brought to an issue last night. The Opposition mustered all their forces, and the Government all theirs, and there was a division: but what did they find now? That the discussion was to be renewed and carried on *ad infinitum*. Was that proper parliamentary warfare? Was it right, the Opposition having challenged an expression of opinion from the House, and that opinion having been given, that the discussion should be renewed by them? There was nothing new to be stated, all the ground having been travelled over by the leaders of each side. He did not agree with the hon. member (Mr. O'Sullivan) that the leaders only should speak, for the followers of to-day might be the leaders to-morrow. The followers of to-day might not always be followers. He himself hoped at some distant day to be Premier. Hon. members might laugh, but he did not see why he should not be, and on that ground, therefore, he held that the hon. member, whom he hoped to have in his Ministry, was wrong. To deal shortly, however, with the main question at issue. One of the main points raised by the Opposition was that those who benefited by the railways should pay for them. Do not let the interest be a charge upon the State, they said. That was their argument, and the principle contended for was first brought into practice by hon. members themselves. They brought in the Western Railway Reserves Act; but what happened under it? The Speaker was one of its strongest opponents, and made a speech against it that would be remembered as long as the colony lasted. He brought forward the irrefutable argu-

ment that the railways should first be built and the land then sold, and that if this were done a higher price would be obtained. The result of the Western Railway Reserves had been as he (Mr. Morehead) had predicted—all the good land around Roma had been thrown into the hands of capitalists who did not want it. They were seized by the throat and told to buy or move on. They had lived, and the small men alongside had died. That had been the effect of the poor man's legislation. He might cite the instance of the owners of Mount Abundance, who now held, without their wish, all their run. They would rather have paid an increased rent and held under a leasehold tenure than burying their money in land. The poor people, the Rosses of Rocky Bank, had gone, on the other hand, and the place knew them no more. The hon. member for Maryborough might laugh, but it was a startling fact, and the result of his legislation. The Western Railway Reserves Act was a measure brought in for the capitalists, although they did not desire it; and the poor man had gone, and the rich man had "mopped" up every acre. Having made the men buy the land, the other side now suggested a land-tax; they first forced men to buy land, and then proposed to tax it. Admitting, for the sake of argument—for as a matter of the fact he denied it—that the present occupants of the Treasury benches were unfit for their places, were these the times to change the Ministry? When everything was in a depressed state, was it a time to change front? Was it a time to shift the man at the wheel when the ship was close upon a rock? He would ask hon. members opposite, with all their lust of power, to have some patriotism in their composition. He did not care one straw whether the party with which he was associated sat on the Ministerial or Opposition side of the House so long as the ship of State was carried into smooth water. It was admitted by the leader of the Opposition that a loan was necessary, and the whole question at issue was as to how it should be divided. The Opposition had done all in their power to damage the credit of the colony, about which conduct there could be but one opinion. These were times when, instead of acting in a factious and party spirit, they should have all combined together in the interests of the colony. What was £1,000 a-year to men who had the interests of the colony at heart? He maintained it was nothing. They should all have combined and made themselves as it were one grand committee of the State to carry the colony on until better times came, when they would have better opportunities for factious party warfare. This was not a fitting time for such warfare, and to repeat almost what he said be-

fore, that the House having once decided that those who were in power should be those who should continue in power, it was unworthy of the Opposition to pursue such tactics as they appeared to be inclined to pursue.

Mr. REA said the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan) had referred to the amount of time occupied by hon. members on that (the Opposition) side of the House, but he believed that if *Hansard* were measured that hon. member and the member for Mitchell would be found to have more columns than any other two members of the House. Again and again the hon. member for Mitchell had interrupted business and wasted the time of the House. The hon. member for Stanley had accused the hon. member for Toowoomba of having withdrawn from his previous statements, but, surely, the support that hon. member (Mr. O'Sullivan) now gave to the squatting party was in strong contrast to all he had ever said before in that House. On many occasions, when the hon. member had an opportunity of showing that the demands of the squatting party were excessive, he had never in any instance since he (Mr. Rea) had been in the House spoken one word in condemnation of that system. When he (Mr. Rea), the other evening, wished to ascertain whether the big runs would be cut up into areas of available size for small men he did not find the hon. member supporting him in the matter, although he said a great deal about settling the people on the lands.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The hon. member did not bring forward a motion.

Mr. REA would ask the hon. member now if he would support him if he brought forward a motion to cut up the big runs so as to make them available for small men? He would take the hon. member at his word, and if he said he would support him he (Mr. Rea) would bring forward a motion to that effect. He was sorry to find the hon. member was silent. The hon. member for Mitchell had referred to the proceedings of last night as being contrary to fair party warfare, but of all the individuals in the House he seemed to have least knowledge of what proper party warfare was. He (Mr. Rea) remembered when he first entered the House, and the hon. member for Rosewood was making a speech on the Address in Reply, the first reflection that crossed his mind was, "Thank God this is not a House of paid members," because any strangers listening to what was going on would say it was the result of payment of members, for they would have found two or three larrikins sitting there interrupting the hon. member in his maiden speech, and would not allow him a fair hearing. Such a thing he had never heard of before in any colony, and certainly not in any other Assembly. This was

the hon. member who now talked about fair party warfare. He did not know the meaning of the term. He had no knowledge whatever that there was anything serious in debate, and even when he spoke with soberness, as he did to-night, there was underlying his remarks something that went to show that all he was saying was a hoax. He maintained that hon. members on the Opposition side of the House had devoted more time and attention to the business of the country since the House met in May last than the supporters of the Government or even Ministers themselves, and yet they were taunted that their conduct was not fair party warfare. He said there was no foundation for it, and that last night the conduct of the Government was most disgraceful. When hon. members on the Opposition side of the House offered to go on with the debate last week the Government refused; but when they got their forces together by telegram, and in every way they could, they would not give the Opposition members half-an-hour, but kept them there until two o'clock in the morning. It was then pointed out that hon. members could not expect to be fully reported in the *Hansard* at that hour, and he found that omissions and mistakes had been made. He was reported to have said with regard to the railway policy of the Government—

"It could easily be understood why they had not brought in any plans or specifications, because their object was to go on with the zig-zag lines to the west to reward their supporters, and not to go on with the branch lines in order to punish their opponents."

That might be taken to mean that he was in favour of the western lines only; but what he said was in reference to both the western lines and the branch lines—that they carefully kept back specifications or any kind of information showing where both the western lines and the branch lines would go, in order that they might favour their supporters and punish their opponents. That was one of the principal grounds why he thought they should insist, before they passed any of these Loan Estimates for railways, that there should be something definite before the House to show in what direction these railways were to go. In another case, through the omission of part of a quotation he made last night, it was made nonsense of. What he wished to show was that even supporters of the Government were under the impression that this three-million loan was to be borrowed at once, and he would now read the whole of the quotation from the *Courier*—

"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."

There could be no mistake about that—that the intention was to borrow £3,000,000 at once. There was the mystery in which the whole affair was shrouded. They would take a vote for £3,000,000 and it would be at the discretion of the Government when it was obtained and how it was disposed of.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the hon. member for Mitchell had made some remarks that were pointedly directed to him in connection with the Western Railway Reserve; and although it had been referred to over and over again, still, that statement coming from the hon. member in the way it did, deserved some notice, and he should, as briefly as possible, make a few remarks on the subject. The hon. member, in criticising the railway policy of the late Government, said that it was most desirable to make railways first and then sell the land, and had accused the late Government of having sold the land first and then made the railway. The hon. member seemed to think that he (Mr. Douglas) had unnecessarily got money out of capitalists. He (Mr. Douglas) had a very great respect for capitalists, no matter whether they were large or small capitalists, but he considered that if a capitalist got value for his money that was quite sufficient. It was pure bunkum to suppose that the people were not to avail themselves of their large estate; if they were not to do that, they were living in a fool's paradise. When an hon. member of such experience as the hon. member for the Mitchell got up and made such accusations against him, it seemed to him to demand something like a contradiction from those who, like himself (Mr. Douglas), believed in the use of capitalists, and who considered it was a most desirable thing to encourage their presence in the colony. They should be thankful for having obtained the money for making the Western Railway; and for having obtained nearly one-half of what they had expended. Up to the present time the actual amount received had been £357,000, which was a sum not to be despised now-a-days, when a pound was a pound, and when every pound was a consideration to the Treasury. For his part, he wished the capitalists well of their bargains, and he believed they had made good bargains: at any rate, the bargains had been good ones for the colony. There was an anxiety on the part of some persons to borrow as much as possible and to release as little of the public estate as they could; but that he looked upon as gross dishonesty—it was as much as to say that they were determined to get as much out of the foreign capitalist as they could and not to allow him to come within their bounds. He believed the capitalists who purchased the western lands were making good use of them in the meantime; but no

doubt the time would come when a better use might be made of them. At any rate, a good use was being made of them, and it was the height of folly to despise the uses to which the land was put by those capitalists. The hon. member thought a good use had not been made of the land obtained in this way; but what was the use of making railways at all, if they were not prepared to make estates by the extension of those railways into the interior? The idea of the hon. member having such a repugnance to sell the land would make him (Mr. Douglas) think that they were not safe in entrusting the party with which the hon. member was connected with the borrowing of money when there was no security that they would sell the lands to meet their indebtedness. He wished to say a few more words in reply to the hon. member, who said the present was not a desirable time to make a change in the Government of the colony. He (Mr. Douglas) admitted that it was not a desirable time to make a change; but he maintained that if the policy of the Government was such that it could be seen that they were going to plunge the country deeper into difficulties than it had ever been plunged in before—that they were going to ask for what would probably be only one-half of what the proposed works would cost—the Opposition might well be pardoned for questioning their policy. It was not the wish of the leader of the Opposition or of himself (Mr. Douglas) to make any change, if they could get a sound policy from the present occupants of office. If hon. gentlemen opposite would admit that the present was not a time for entering into these large and wild speculations—for that was what they really were—and if they would admit what the hon. member for the Mitchell had admitted, that these were very difficult times, and that they might look forward to times when they might have to encounter still more difficulties than they had ever had to encounter, then the Opposition would willingly entrust the administration of affairs to the hands of the present Government. If they were satisfied that the Government would conduct affairs on a sound footing, they would not desire any change at the present time. What they did want was, that there should be a very marked change in the policy of the Government.

Mr. BEATTIE said that when the Premier, as leader of the Opposition, introduced his motion last session for a loan of £3,000,000, he opposed it, as the hon. gentleman then proposed a scheme somewhat similar to the present in regard to the extension of the trunk lines into the interior. He believed in trunk lines when it was possible to carry them out with advantage to the country; but he did not think, with their present sparse population, they were in a position

to expend out of a loan of £3,000,000 a sum of £1,200,000 for the purpose of extending trunk lines into the interior. If the Premier would modify his Estimates by striking out the items for lines into the interior, then they might proceed with the Estimates and vote others which would be of advantage to the country. He had already, on previous occasions, expressed an opinion that the time had arrived when they should stop the extension of those lines; and he should oppose any such extensions now to the utmost of his ability. At the present time, they should pay more attention to the construction of branch lines in the agricultural districts; and he believed if that was proposed, and the Government came forward with proper plans and specifications, hon. members would not oppose the construction of any one of them. The first branch line on the list—and it had been alluded to by hon. members on both sides of the House—was that between Brisbane and Sandgate, but he had always considered that in connection with that line should be one for the benefit of the farmers on the Pine River and Caboolture districts, and also one for the encouragement of the coal trade in the southern part of the colony. A great deal had been said about extending the railway from Oxley to South Brisbane; but, although he was not opposed to that branch line, he believed for coal traffic it would be much better to take it to Bulimba. He noticed that the Government had a scheme for making the Brisbane and Sandgate line at £4,000 a mile; but before hon. members could be expected to agree to that some information should be given as to how it was intended to take the line and who it was proposed to benefit. No such information had been given, but the House had been told by the Premier, "This is our railway policy, and we intend to carry out these lines if you give us the money." With reference to the proposed £62,000 for the Sandgate line, it was calculated up to £4,000 a mile; but he hoped that in the construction of the branch lines they were not going to have a second edition of the Ipswich-Brisbane line. On what authority did the Ministry arrive at the sum of £4,000 a mile for the Sandgate work when the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate was considerably higher? All the Ministry said was "if" it can be done for £4,000 a mile the country will be justified in doing it; but did hon. members believe they ever intended to construct it? He was sure they did not. A commission had been held to inquire into the best means of taking the Southern and Western Railway to deep-water for the purposes of facilitating the coal traffic. Three or four schemes had been submitted by those who were most competent to judge of the best route to be taken. A mass of

evidence was taken, and the evidence of the Engineer-in-Chief, whose authority on such a subject would not be disputed, was that he was in favour of the extension to Bulimba as the natural outlet of the existing line, and that it would be more convenient and much cheaper to construct that line to some portion of Bulimba Reach, near the ferry probably, than any other extension. He took the opportunity of saying that it was the interference with the engineer by the Executive that a large amount of money was wasted on Ipswich-Brisbane extension. There was also a scheme to touch the Queen's Wharf, and the amount estimated by the Engineer-in-Chief to carry that line out was £24,000; the line to Bulimba £48,000, and the South Brisbane line £55,000, to River Terrace. Unless a large expenditure were made on River Terrace, the locality itself was totally unadapted for shipping purposes, so far as the shipment of coal was concerned. They had also been told that by carrying the line from Oxley to South Brisbane that there would be a large suburban traffic encouraged; but could they not also claim just as much for the line to Bulimba? As he was very anxious to have the opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief in the Bulimba extension, the plans were submitted and were now records of the House. The plans of the extension to Sandgate contained a loop line to Bulimba to about where the ferry was; and with a view to assist the suburban traffic the Engineer-in-Chief proposed to have a station in the lower part of Fortitude Valley near the English Church. There was some sense in that. The Government having proposed to carry a line to Sandgate, the whole extent of line from a certain point in the Acclimatization Society's grounds would be about a mile and two-thirds to strike the river at Bulimba. That distance was the whole extension for coal traffic that ought to be fairly debited to the Bulimba extension; the rest should be debited to the Sandgate and Caboolture line. If that were done it would reduce the £48,000 set down as the cost of the Bulimba extension one-third, making its cost about £30,000 altogether. To carry the line that way would be to get the work better and cheaper done, and would be one of the things to give a great impetus to the coal trade. He was strengthened in his belief by a remark of the Colonial Secretary's, who had said, when there was a reference made to the desirability of a South Brisbane line, that such a line in twenty-five years might be very necessary. If that was his opinion some two or three years ago when he made the remark, had anything occurred in the meantime to induce him to alter his mind? There could be no doubt that the Bulimba route was the proper route to deep-water,

as an extension of the Southern and Western Railway. He was sorry that hon. members on the other side who spoke on the previous night had again alluded to the cry of reviling the Southern members with their want of liberality to the Northern and Western districts. He dared any individual member of that side to say that they ever knew him (Mr. Beattie), while he had had the honour of representing a metropolitan constituency, to oppose anything which was for the benefit of the West or North. He came there to do justice to every part of the colony, and he would disgrace himself if he did not give as much justice to the North and the West as to the South. If it was a misfortune to live in Queen street, they should not be accused of having attempted on all occasions to be unjust. As to the trunk lines, the Government would be doing the correct thing if they withdrew for a time the estimate of £1,200,000 for their extension. The extension of the Central line ought to be stopped, but he would have been better pleased if the Government had been more explicit with what they intended to do with the last item on the Estimates for branches—the branch towards Clermont. Some years ago Clermont and Copperfield were populous districts, and none would deny now that there was a large amount of mineral wealth in those districts. He had said before this occasion that it was the duty of the Government to stop the trunk lines and pay attention to the populous districts, mentioning Clermont and Copperfield as one. It would be well if Government were prepared to give them some particulars—whether the line was to start from Retreat or where. By carrying that line out there was no doubt they would give an impetus to trade between Clermont and Rockhampton, and that branch would probably pay the interest on the outlay. There was also a large amount of good land in the locality, and the line would encourage settlement upon it. No hon. member of the other side would say that the carrying out of the trunk lines would encourage settlement in the interior of the country for agricultural purposes. They would not, and it could not be expected that, if they were constructed, agricultural settlement would come for a long time. Government would therefore act wisely to modify their Loan Estimates by striking out the extension of trunk lines. Of course, the £418,000 required to complete works already authorised must be voted. He did not see anything in the Loan Estimates for the completion of the railway from Townsville to Charters Towers, and he presumed, therefore, that sufficient for the purpose had already been voted. He did not feel justified in voting for the extension of the trunk lines, believing that such extensions were not justifiable

in the present condition of the colony, and he should do his utmost, in a fair and legitimate manner, to oppose them. The vote for the improvement of harbours and rivers would be money well spent. He would not oppose anything that would encourage the mercantile trade of the colony, and by making the ports more accessible the cheaper would goods be landed, and considerable advantages would accrue to the colony from money expended with that object. In connection with the Sandgate line, he had omitted to mention that if it was to go straight from Brisbane to Sandgate it would never pay. If it was made to diverge towards the racecourse that would prove an important source of revenue, and suburban traffic would be greatly developed by having a station near the English Church. Until reaching the Acclimatization Society's grounds the line would run through Crown lands, but afterwards it would pass through private property. There were many items on the Estimates which had his hearty support; but he should oppose the extension of the trunk lines into the interior, and he hoped the Government would see their way to leave those items over until the colony was in a better position to carry the works out.

Mr. KINGSFORD said the hon. member for Rockhampton had thanked God that the members of the Assembly were not paid members. He (Mr. Kingsford) hoped the time would come when he should have reason to thank God that the House had become a limited talking company. As almost every hon. member had offered a reason for the vote he had given, he supposed he must follow suit. Why he voted against the Government was this: on weighing the arguments advanced by the Government since they came into office until the present time—in the Governor's Speech, and in the two financial statements—he had come to the conclusion that though there was no lack of ability in the Government, yet that they had not grasped the momentous and immediate necessities of the colony. Hence their Loan Estimate and the measures they proposed under it were utterly insufficient to meet urgent requirements. On those Estimates there was no doubt a good deal worthy of attention, and which if separated from those of an inferior quality would meet with the support of every hon. member. But taking the estimate as a whole, he thought that if carried out it would have no other tendency than to bring about ultimately a repetition of that depression under which the colony now suffered. Because the Government did not understand the requirements of the colony, and had not introduced measures that tended towards its prosperity, he could not support them.

Question put and passed, and the House went into Committee of Supply.

On the motion that £100,000 be granted from loan for immigration—

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what were the intentions of the Government with respect to immigration? The Premier had always said that when this vote came on he would state what those intentions were. He should also like to know what had become of the shipping contracts. Were any of them still running?

The PREMIER said the information asked for he had given over and over again. All shipping contracts were stopped, and, as soon as ever the Government saw a chance of commencing immigration again, they were prepared to go on with it. To-day papers had been laid on the table, and would be circulated to-morrow, giving the results of immigration up to the present time.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what was the use of their having the information to-morrow, when the vote had come on to-night? He had not the remotest idea as to the intentions of the Government, and business would be facilitated by the information being given. Did they intend to commence immigration soon; and if it was to be conducted on an entirely new system, what was that system?

The PREMIER said that if the hon. gentleman would give him an inkling of the kind of information he wanted he should be glad to supplement what he had said. He could not say when immigration would be resumed, but they certainly did not intend to resume it at present while men were leaving the colony. As soon as it was seen that there was a field for labour here the Government would resume immigration. All the contracts were at present in abeyance, and the contractors were quite prepared to finish their contracts whenever asked to do so by the Government.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman ought to be well aware of the nature of the shipping contracts, as they were made while he was in office. The Government were not bound to carry out those contracts while there were no immigrants to carry out. That was the condition of the contracts, and when immigration was resumed the Government would give the preference to those shippers whose contracts it had been found necessary to stop.

Mr. DICKSON said it did not appear as though the Government intended to carry on immigration to the same extent as heretofore even when they did resume operations. The available loan balance on the 30th June was £95,000, and the amount asked for on loan account was £100,000. The expenditure for the last twelve months had been £108,000, so that the Government would not be in a position to carry on

immigration on the same scale as hitherto for as long as two years. The Colonial Treasurer stated that his loan would cover requirements for three or four years, and prevent the necessity of again appealing to the public creditor within that period. The provision made therefore showed that the Government could only intend to carry on immigration at half the scale hitherto adopted. Was that surmise a correct one? He also wished to call attention to the reduction in the London office, caused chiefly by the services of clerks having been dispensed with, and to ask whether, when operations were resumed, it was intended to carry on the work with the reduced staff?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the Government had not the slightest intention in carrying on immigration on the same scale or in the same manner as hitherto. They hoped to resume it on another basis, and have an officer in charge who would not allow the halt, the maimed, the blind, those dying of consumption, and the refuse of humanity, to pass muster as other officers had done. It had come to the notice of the Government, from very good authority, that hardly any officer of the Agent-General saw the immigrants until they were on board and it was too late to send them back. In future they would have to pass not only the shipping officer—one of the oldest officers in the Queensland service—but also the doctor of the ship would have word and be able to prevent refuse from being cast on our shores. Very few who looked into the matter would wish that immigration should be carried on at the same rate as it had been for the last few years. In 1874, 9,436 people came to our shores; in 1875, 5,659; in 1876, 5,666; in 1877, 6,048; in 1878, 7,050; and in 1879, 3,883. The last number were those received since immigration had been stopped, their passages having been previously arranged for. The colony was overloaded with labour, and the result was that the immigrants went away nearly as fast as they came in. It had been a standing joke with the Premiers of New South Wales for the last ten years that there was no necessity for them to resume immigration, as they could get the immigrants from Queensland. He had heard Sir John Robertson often say that Queensland would do all that for them. Nearly half the servant girls around Sydney and thousands of labouring men in Sydney would say that they came to the colonies in that way. It was the duty of the Government to regulate immigration according to the demand for labour, and to see that the colony was able to absorb the labour it paid for so dearly. To show the enormous increase in the number of immigrants, he would read the results since 1869. In that

year there came out 1,878 people, and the country was able to absorb them; in 1870, 2,740; in 1871, 3,285; in 1872, 2,540; in 1873, 7,445;—the other numbers he had read. It would be seen that from 1873 to 1874 the number jumped up, and though there had been a steady increase since 1875, that number had never since been reached. The Government had no intention of carrying on immigration on that scale. If they remained in office they would endeavour to balance the supply and demand, and not import for neighbouring colonies. Much as they loved them, they were not bound to find them in labour.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the Colonial Secretary said this colony had imported immigrants for the benefit of the neighbouring colonies, but such was not the case. It was true that Sir John Robertson had made that boast, but if hon. members looked into the figures they would find it was only a boast. According to the inter-colonial exchanges the balance of immigration had been in our favour, and whilst it was so the colony had no right to complain. He freely admitted that during last year there had been a turn, and under those circumstances he should not advocate the continuation of immigration on anything like the same scale as before. Still it had been one of the best things the colony had done to encourage immigration, and he was sorry to hear the hon. member characterise that class as the halt, the blind, and the maimed. There had been some among them not very strong or healthy, but the majority of the immigrants had been a robust, healthy, and suitable class of persons. There might have been exceptions—possibly some rogues and perhaps a few criminals—he hoped not many of the last-named. There had been defects of administration, and in other respects, he was aware. In some cases the medical men sent out were not physically fit for duty, and seemed to have been induced to go on board on account of their own defects of health. Any medical officer who was appointed surgeon-superintendent was, however, required by the Agent-General to inspect every immigrant before he went on board ship, and if he did not do so he failed to discharge his duty. It had been his duty to call the attention of the Agent-General to the defects he had noted, and he hoped they were now remedied.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would call the attention of the ex-Colonial Secretary to the fact that his ex-Colonial Treasurer once favoured some of the best workmen in the colony with free passes to Dalby to enable them to go into New South Wales, thereby showing his great knowledge of the geographical position of the two colonies.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said, with regard to the balance of immigration, this colony lost those immigrants whom they

had been importing at great cost, and the arrivals were diggers who came on their own account and who were to a very great extent birds of passage. The men and women this colony paid dearly for went away, he was afraid, never to return. He admitted, as the ex-Colonial Secretary said, that the majority of the immigrants had been robust enough, but there had not been a ship by which we had not had halt, blind, maimed, and, sometimes, idiots and lunatics, palmed off on to us. Some of the doctors had been in the last stage of consumption—one had died on the passage, and one immediately after arrival. Such things he should endeavour to stop or know the reason why. The vote of £195,000 would go a long way towards carrying on immigration on such a scale as the Government proposed. They would not begin, at all events, until the cool weather, and then at the rate of about 3,000 a-year. Then they could feel the pulse of the colony, and ascertain what number of immigrants the labour-market could absorb. A small shipload of immigrants selected by friends in the colony might come out in the meantime, but no other ship was likely to come out until the Government were fairly in position to resume operations.

Mr. Low said he at one time sent sixteen immigrants to his station. Of this number two were shipped as blacksmiths and two carpenters; but the blacksmiths did not know any more about a hammer than a blackfellow, and the carpenters could not tell the difference between an adze and an axe. Before they had been four months in his employ they received letters from friends in New South Wales and Victoria, advising them to leave the colony and go south.

Mr. DICKSON said the hon. member for the Mitchell had made an accusation against him which was entirely unfounded. The hon. member had a fertile imagination, and had no doubt drawn upon it. As that hon. member took a special objection to German immigration, he (Mr. Dickson) should be glad to learn whether it was the intention of the Government to resume that branch of European immigration when a suitable time arrived?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said they should certainly take their own countrymen first, and if they found they could not get enough of them then it would be time enough to go to foreign countries. Of course, no difference would be made so far as assisted immigrants were concerned; but when they resumed immigration they should certainly go to their own country first, and with proper management they could get more immigrants from there than they wanted. New Zealand seemed to have no difficulty in getting desirable immigrants, but he believed that this colony

had obtained a worse lot than any other colony, not only from the old country but from Germany also. Hundreds had been sent from the old country as agriculturists who had never seen a plough or spade in their life. The clerks in the office had been dismissed, there being no work for them. He did not know that they did their duties badly, but he did blame the agents and the Agent-General for not taking sufficient care in the selection of the immigrants. Although the great majority were good men, there were many bad immigrants sent out. He had heard that in every ship a bad class had been included, and they knew that a little leaven leavened the lump, and that bad feeling had been created in consequence.

Mr. MOREHEAD was astonished at the hardihood of the hon. member (Mr. Dickson). The hon. member did say that when in office either he or one of his colleagues granted free passes to Dalby to enable people to get to New South Wales.

Mr. DICKSON said he distinctly denied the statement, and *Hansard* of last year would show that he had then denied it. However, he rose more for the purpose of replying to the Colonial Secretary, who said that their immigration system was badly conducted, and that several unsuitable characters had been sent out, which was doubtless correct. The same charge did not apply to German and Scandinavian immigration. They had been of great benefit as colonists, and the same sweeping accusations as to their unsuitability did not lie with the same force against them as against the immigrants that might have been sent out haphazard from English ports. He therefore regretted that the Colonial Secretary had not held out any probability of the Government considering the desirability of resuming German and Scandinavian immigration.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was nearly eleven o'clock, and he should like to know how far the Government proposed going with the Estimates? The immigration vote, no doubt, could be disposed of, but the Government could not expect to carry the railway vote at that hour of the evening.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had never made any sweeping assertions against German or Scandinavian immigration. As good men, or nearly as good, came from Germany as any part of the world; but the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) was mistaken if he imagined that all those sent out were desirable men to have. He had it from high authority that hardly a ship came out which had not the offscourings from their gaols and penitentiaries. The hon. member need not plume himself that there had not been a bad assortment among the classes sent out. German immigrants made ex-

cellent colonists, but the hon. member must not run away with the idea that all those who were sent out were all pure and perfect little angels.

Mr. DOUGLAS was sorry to hear the hon. gentleman speak as he had done. He intended to say something on the immigration question, but thought the leader of the Opposition's question should first be answered.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the question before the House was the immigration vote, and after that was settled it was time enough to go into another question. However anxious hon. members might be to get to their beds, they must remember that for hours they had kept the Government from doing business by discussing a question decided last night.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Colonial Secretary's reason seemed to be a very curious one, why an ordinary question that he had put had not been answered. It was not usual to take business at that late hour.

The PREMIER admitted that it was unusual, but it was very unusual, also, to keep dawdling away the time of the House from half-past three o'clock until eleven without getting to business. The hon. gentleman, in putting his question, had said that the Government would not expect to carry the railway vote that evening. His intention, however, was to move, immediately after the immigration vote was passed, that £1,170,000 should be granted for the three main line extensions, and they would continue sitting until they got it, or good reason was given why they should not. In the meantime he could see none.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the utter absence of any information with respect to the railway vote was quite sufficient reason for not proceeding with it at that sitting. No House in its senses would grant it without further information. He could not believe that the Government were sincere, for of course they knew that it would be idle of them to expect to get the railway vote passed that evening. He could not understand what they were driving at. If they wanted to go to the country straight they had better do it at once. A more extraordinary way of doing business he had never seen. The Premier surely must know that business was conducted by conciliation and not by any other means. The hon. gentleman had complained of the debate that had taken place that afternoon, but he must have well known, when he refused to adjourn the debate last night, that hon. members who had been prevented speaking would speak to-day. The hon. gentleman should not lose his temper, and ought to see that it was absurd to think of going on. It would only give rise to ill-feeling which might last until the end of the session. He hoped better counsels would prevail.

The PREMIER said the leader of the Opposition was greatly mistaken if he imagined that he was out of temper. He had been sitting quietly listening to what the hon. gentleman had called a debate, but he would put it to his common-sense whether the information of the House had been supplemented by it? A discussion on the no-confidence motion had been carried on, and the speeches which had been heard from the Ministerial side had been forced by remarks from Opposition members. All the speeches delivered from the Opposition benches could have been delivered last night. He quite agreed that conciliation had a great deal to do in the conduct of business; but he could tell the hon. gentleman, also, that concession on the part of the Government which he meant was more than conciliation. The Government wanted to have something of their own way. The House had been in session three months, out of which the Government had had thirty-five days. Sixteen of these days had been devoted wholly to talking on the policy of the Government, and nineteen days to passing Bills and Estimates, so that the Opposition had nearly half the time to discussing general matters, and yet they complained at the Government wanting to push business. The hon. gentleman said they could not do it at that sitting: the Government would try, at all events. They intended to go on with the railway votes. The hon. gentleman had had weeks to ask for information about them. Loan Estimates had never been so long before Parliament before being discussed, and if the hon. gentleman waited for a month he would not get more information than the Government were now prepared to give him. The hon. gentleman knew how the voting would be.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I do not. I don't think it will be carried in a full House.

The PREMIER said that the hon. gentleman ought to have taken advantage of to-day, if he wished to throw aside a policy which he condemned, by taking a decision to-day, because if he waited for months he would not find such a full house as there had been since four o'clock this afternoon; he would never see such a large House again this session. All the information that he wished—all that he had asked for the Government were now perfectly prepared to give, with the exception of plans and sections. That the Government did not intend to give at present, and they stated so, and if the hon. member waited for weeks he would not get that information; and still they would ask the decision of the House upon these votes. It was a course never persisted in not only by this Parliament, but by the Parliaments of any of the other colonies—to ask for plans and sections on a vote of this kind. Hon. members had never been accustomed to have all the details of the

proposed line before them until they were asked to express formal approval of the route. The Administration of which the hon. gentleman was a member never produced plans and sections when they asked authority to borrow. Seven millions of money were voted in New South Wales, the other day, without plans and sections being before Parliament, or even one-tenth of the information he had laid upon the table of the House in regard to these railways. They had sufficient knowledge to justify them in saying that the money should be borrowed. Hon. members must know perfectly well that before the railways could be commenced plans and sections and books of reference of every individual line must be submitted to the consideration of Parliament, and that was the time to consider details; but now they were simply to deal with the scheme as a whole, and, if they approved of it, to say so, and if not, to throw it out.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the speech of the hon. gentleman was quite irrelevant to the point he (Mr. Griffith) had raised. He had given reasons why the Loan Estimates should be considered, but not why they should commence such important business at nearly midnight. All the rest was merely an expression of opinion that they should have commenced the business at four o'clock. But they had not yet began a reign of gagging in that House—it had not been begun on that side of the House, at any rate; and from the Government side they had had two speeches to-night nearly as long as any from that side. He failed to see why the hon. members who had spoken to-night had not as much right to speak as those who spoke yesterday. Was there ever such a thing heard of in any Parliament before, as that the Premier should get up and say that he should commence the most important business of the session at midnight, and force it down the throats of a powerful minority simply because a few hon. members had exercised their undoubted right of debating a question of very great importance on the motion to go into Committee of Supply.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was decided last night.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Government forced a division last night because the Opposition scorned to have recourse to the same tactics with which they were opposed—tactics of obstruction and brute force. They scorned to adopt that course of action, and went to a division; but the Treasurer knew very well that he could not by that means ultimately succeed in stifling discussion. If the hon. gentleman had made a mistake, why did he not admit it, and let them go on in the ordinary way? It was the most important business of the session, and by attempting to begin it at that time the hon. gentleman would only

succeed in getting everybody in the House into a state of the extremest ill-temper. He could tell the hon. member this—that if he attempted to go on with these railway estimates to-night, the consequence would lie on his own head. If he did so he would do so deliberately, and with no other object than to endeavour to stir up ill-feeling and bitter ill-will on both sides of the House. An hon. member said the minds of the Opposition were made up as to the course they should pursue, but it was nothing of the kind. His mind was far from being made up. He was as disposed now as at any part of the session to assist in conducting the business of the House. There was no one more tired of sitting there, night after night, and doing so little business, than he was; but if the Premier now said he would begin to insist on stirring up ill-will—that he would adopt the very worst means of getting his policy carried, he (Mr. Griffith) could tell him that the sooner he dissolved the House and went to the country the better, because that was the only possible conclusion to such a course of proceeding. He hoped sincerely the hon. gentleman would not do anything of the kind, but he seemed determined to drive the Opposition to obstruction. If ever there was a Treasurer who invited, who insisted upon, who entreated to be obstructed, it was the present Treasurer. If he wanted to see his policy seriously considered and carried, why did he not adopt the usual tactics of a Government, and not make the fact that a few members had spoken to-night who had a perfect right to speak a miserable pretext for exciting ill-will which he knew very well it would take the remainder of the session to calm down?

Mr. MOREHEAD said the leader of the Opposition had patted himself pretty considerably on the back for the way he conducted business last night, but his only object was to allow his hon. friend to be in his place by a certain time. That was the extent of his fidelity to his party—to enable members who had been working in the courts all day to get to the House in time.

Mr. GARRICK said the statement of the hon. member for Mitchell, who never appeared so happy as when he was personally offensive in his remarks, was not correct. He (Mr. Garrick) had no idea last night about to-day, or that he would have any work to do to-day, and he thought the hon. member should withdraw the statement.

Mr. WALSH thought every consideration should be shown to members residing in Brisbane who had daily duties to attend to, but he also thought that members who came long distances deserved some slight consideration. He had been told outside the House—and it was known from Cooktown to Brisbane—that the Opposition intended to block these Loan Estimates by

every means in their power; that they would even talk against time to do so and prevent the business of the country being proceeded with. If that were the case, all he could say was that the sooner he resigned his seat and did something else the better; but although he might not be a very valuable member, he believed the result would not be to the advantage of the country, because a very undesirable class would be likely to come in. Persons who had anything else to do could not afford to waste time in the way it had hitherto been wasted in that House.

Mr. RUTLEDGE denied that any arrangement had been made amongst the Opposition to block the Loan Estimates; but the business was of the utmost importance, and ought to be fully considered and analysed, which could not be done at that hour when members were wearied after last night's sitting. He thought it would be good policy for the Premier to agree to postpone these estimates; but if he did not do so he (Mr. Rutledge), although he felt ill, would try to find sufficient physical strength to enable him to keep a House together until to-morrow morning.

Mr. AMHURST said there was no reason why the Committee should not go on with business, as it was the practice of the House of Commons to sit till two or three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. KINGSFORD agreed with hon. members that there had been too much talking, but that was no reason why they should not now adjourn. He disclaimed any desire to offer factious opposition, and suggested an adjournment of the debate till Monday, when no doubt they would all meet in good fellowship and be prepared to go on with business.

Mr. MOREHEAD pointed out that the supporters of the present Government were taking exactly the same position that supporters of previous Governments had done at various times. It was absurd to suppose that with a majority at their back the Government were going to give way. The Opposition had been defeated fairly, and they should accept their defeat manfully and allow the Government to go on with their business.

Mr. STUBBLEY expressed his determination to obstruct the Government until they furnished more information to the Committee in regard to the Estimates before them.

Mr. REA protested against the continuation of business, and appealed to the reporters to let the country know that a loan of £3,000,000 was to be forced through the Committee after half-past eleven o'clock at night.

Mr. MILES said that they did not intend to have this vote of three millions thrust down their throats to night.

Mr. MESTON moved the reduction of the item by £99,999, and he might tell hon. members who were inclined to interrupt him he was not going to be intimidated by any political Zulus on the other side. As regarded the amendment, he might express his hostility to immigration at the expense of the State, which was a political mistake. Reference had been made to Scandinavian immigrants, and he endorsed what the Colonial Secretary said, that amongst the Danish immigrants especially there had been several objectionable arrivals, and that a large percentage of the disreputable women of Brisbane came from Copenhagen at an expense to the colony of £25 each. They had also received objectionable persons from England and Ireland. If, however, any immigrants were to be introduced at the expense of the State there should be a fair share of Germans. He had hoped to see a revision of the tariff to protect colonial industries, and thus afford employment for new-comers and encourage manufactures as well. He was strongly opposed to kanakas, and held it to be wrong to introduce any system of cheap labour which clashed with white men. There were 6,000 kanakas in the colony, who displaced 6,000 white men. He should always oppose State immigration.

After further discussion,

Mr. DICKSON said there was no desire to oppose the vote for immigration, and asked the Premier if he would be content to pass that vote to-night, and go on with the railway votes on Monday, when the Committee would be in a better temper?

The PREMIER said he was only following the precedent set by the Opposition two years ago, when they introduced a vote for a million after midnight without giving nearly so much information as had been afforded now. After passing the vote for immigration, he intended to move the vote for the extension of trunk railways.

Mr. DOUGLAS said there were no doubt occasions when the leader of the Government was bound to make a stand and insist on the passing of certain votes; but there was no parallel between this and the previous occasion referred to by the Premier. The bunch of railways was not carried until after long discussion on the Railway Reserves Bill, and after plans, specifications, and estimates had been submitted. Not until all the stages had been gone through in the ordinary form was the vote asked for. The Colonial Secretary had referred to the number of idiots and insane sent out under the immigration system, saying that hardly a ship arrived without some of them; but on referring to Dr. Smith's statistics, the inference was that there had not been an undue proportion of such people sent out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There ought not to have been one.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that insanity might develop itself after the arrival of the immigrants, as was the case with the Irish girls referred to by Dr. Smith, the cause of which was melancholia resulting from home-sickness. He did not attribute to the Colonial Secretary a desire to throw cold-water upon immigration. That hon. gentleman had given a guarantee that on suitable occasion he could carry on a system of immigration. In 1873 and 1874 the large numbers of immigrants was chiefly due to the system he then adopted. His remarks to-night were, however, calculated to discredit the whole system, and would probably have undue weight with those not so well acquainted with the hon. gentlemen as he (Mr. Douglas) was.

Mr. RUTLEDGE hoped the hon. member for Rosewood would withdraw the amendment. He was prepared to vote for the £100,000, and he thought the Government might take a vote on that item with the understanding that the remainder of the Estimates should be postponed. The members of the Opposition had not yet had an opportunity of consulting together as they would like to do before voting on the other items.

Mr. BEOR said the Opposition was so divided into parties, that it was idle for any hon. member to stand forward and offer to make terms which other hon. members would not consider themselves bound to observe. The party who were now obstructing the business would not have the thanks of the country for acting in that way.

Mr. DICKSON said he rose on account of the Colonial Treasurer having stated that he was only following the example he (Mr. Dickson) had set in 1877, when the railway proposals of the then Government were under discussion. He found that the Colonial Treasurer's quotation was not correct. The first item on the Loan Estimates of that year was £150,000 for immigration. On the 12th October those Estimates were discussed, and although that item was moved at a late hour, the previous part of the evening having been taken up with a debate on the general loan policy, the amount was granted, and then the chairman was moved out of the chair, and the consideration of the really objectionable portion of the Estimates—namely, the new railways, held over for the next sitting. As the Colonial Treasurer had expressed his willingness to abide by that precedent, he (Mr. Dickson) hoped that this explanation would be accepted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) had not correctly stated the question at issue. The Colonial Treasurer alluded to the debate on the 16th October, when the then Colonial

Treasurer, after moving several other items, at 1 o'clock in the morning moved that the sum of £720,000 be granted for railways. Upon that question the committee sat all night, and until 6 o'clock the next evening, when the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) got his vote passed. That was the question exactly as the Colonial Treasurer put it. To-night, at half-past 10, the Colonial Secretary moved the vote for £100,000 for immigration, but previous to that several hon. members had said that they would obstruct under any circumstances, even shilling by shilling. The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Rutledge), who was a man of peace, threatened to obstruct, because the party to which he belonged had not had an opportunity of arranging amongst themselves as to how they should vote. If a caucus was necessary it should have been held previously. He did not blame the Opposition for taking the course they had, but they must put up with the consequences, as the Ministerial party had to do when they were in opposition. They were obliged to give in, as a minority always must in any system of representative Government.

After some further discussion,

Mr. GARRICK called attention to the state of the Committee—quorum formed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it looked very much indeed as if the Opposition did not mean to obstruct, when the Government found the hon. member for Moreton calling attention to the state of the Committee, thinking to steal a march upon them. Well, there was a full Committee now, and there would be until this time to-morrow. He would warn hon. members opposite that for the rest of the session the Government would keep them up all hours to get business done. They would not be talked out. On every occasion that the Government had tried they had talked out their opponents.

Mr. McLEAN, by reference to *Hansard*, corroborated Mr. Dickson's account of the way in which the loan vote for railways was passed in 1877.

Mr. GARRICK, after commenting on the conduct of the Government and their supporters, asked the Colonial Secretary if at the time the order was given for the suspension of immigration there were any contracts existing with shippers, and if any consideration was given to the contractors?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had given the information the hon. member asked early that afternoon, and he ought to have been in his place to hear it. He then stated that there were three contracts entered into, but in each case there was a clause in the contract—that if the Government did not require immigrants they were not to bring them. There had been no

breach of contract, and when immigration was resumed the contractors would have the first chance of carrying out their contracts.

Mr. RUTLEDGE defended the action of the Opposition, and said they were willing to let the £100,000 for immigration go, but they could not consent to the railways being forced upon them to-night. He hoped the Government would not presume upon their superior numerical strength to rush them into voting nearly a million and a quarter for trunk railways.

Question—That 1s. only be granted for immigration—put and negatived.

Question—That £100,000 be granted for Immigration—put and passed.

The PREMIER moved £1,170,000 for the Extension of Railways.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that the vote for £100,000 for immigration having been taken, a great deal of importance attached to that, inasmuch as it committed the House to a loan. The hon. gentleman should not overlook that. It was the concession of an important principle, and after what had been said he thought they might very well adjourn, now, in the hope that they should be able to proceed with further business in a calmer frame of mind on some future day.

Mr. DICKSON said, if the Treasurer pressed the vote it would be a clear breach of faith with the Opposition, because it was distinctly understood that they were prepared to consider the question of adjournment after the immigration vote was passed. Although the Colonial Secretary made no direct promise, he led him (Mr. Dickson) and other members to believe that if the immigration vote was passed the Treasurer would not press the Loan Estimates further to-night. However, he (Mr. Dickson) was not going to plead *ad misericordiam*, but would ask the Premier whether he would move the Chairman out of the chair? In any case there would be no further applications for concessions—it would be a case of dogged resistance on both sides, and he would be sorry that matters should come to that. He hoped that the Premier would see the desirability of moving the Chairman out of the chair, and allowing the consideration of the railway vote to remain over for another day.

The PREMIER said that as to the charge of breach of faith on the part of the Government made by the hon. gentleman, he had stated plainly that when the vote of £100,000 for immigration was passed, he should move the next item of £1,170,000 for railways, and he was sure his hon. colleague, the Colonial Secretary, had made no other arrangement. The Government had intended, when they came to the House that afternoon, to make some progress with the Loan Estimates.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that attempting to force on the Loan Estimates at that late hour would have the effect of stifling any fair expression of opinion on the important question of the construction of additional railways. As, however, the Government had announced their determination to force the Estimates through that night, it would simply resolve itself into a question of physical endurance. He had made up his mind to prevent the vote for £1,170,000 being passed; and, although it was a painful thing to him as a young member to have to obstruct, it was, nevertheless, an imperative duty. He had not done so before during the debate, but he would now proclaim himself an opponent of the proposition to construct three trunk lines into the interior to compete with one another, as they would have to do. He believed that if one great transcontinental line such as that proposed by the *Courier*, and of which he was surprised the Premier had made no mention, was adopted, it would do more to develop the resources of the colony than anything else. If Government were to construct lines for 130 miles, it would be found that when they got to the end of the distance the objects they had in view were partially accomplished only, and that it would be then necessary to come to the House and ask for more money to complete their scheme. The 130 miles would land them somewhere, no doubt, but it would probably be at no point now recognised as a centre to which trade naturally gravitated. The Opposition wished to prevent Government coming down with an *ad misericordiam* appeal for more money to repair their mistakes. It was possible that the sum of £3,000 per mile might be enough; but as there were no surveys of the extensions, he was justified in assuming that all sorts of unforeseen difficulties would be discovered, and that the lines would cost half as much again. It was not such a case as the Sandgate line, where surveys had been made and data found to determine the cost of the line, but with the trunk lines they had nothing to go on. If the Government had the courage they would extend one line on something similar terms to those proposed by the *Courier* in the trans-continental scheme, and if they did so they would find a considerable following in the House. The extensions of 130 miles would be of no use to the far-western squatters, who would then be asking for extensions still further. If left to the squatters themselves in a system of land grants, they would build trunk lines and the feeders to assist them as well. He believed in giving fair play to the squatters, but three little peddling lines like these would be no good whatever. The lines would cost far more than the Colonial Treasurer anticipated; the points

to which they were to be taken might be found to be not the most suitable for the desired purpose; and the distance it was proposed to carry them would not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the interior. He believed in the system of constructing lines by land grants to private companies. If this three-million loan were brought into the colony money would be plentiful and interest low, and it would induce people to launch out into all kinds of new ventures; all the usual sources of prosperity would be inflated, and the result would be financial disaster when pressure was necessary. He presumed that the Premier, following the example of Sir Julius Vogel, would take a trip to England to negotiate the loan, and if he did he would find that he must conclude his arrangements for the whole loan. When it was brought into the colony it would have to go into the banks and by them it would be lent out, and when required it could not be recalled without bringing ruin upon those to whom it had been advanced. He would move, as an amendment, that the sum be reduced by £1,169,999 19s.

Mr. DICKSON was sure hon. members on both sides would agree that the last speaker had delivered a most excellent speech on the question, and that it was matter for regret that, on account of the lateness of the hour, it could not be fully reported in *Hansard*. Assuming that the Treasurer floated the proposed loan successfully, and that the expenditure from loan increased by only twenty-five per cent. upon the present rate, which must certainly be the case owing to construction of new works, the hon. gentleman would find, in two years, that he would have to come down for a fresh loan. The proposals of the Government contained no provision for surveys, and there was no information as to the destination of the contemplated extensions of the trunk lines. The Premier had also ignored the question of interest; but if he should be in office next year, or the year after, he would find that he would have to deal with it. It would have been more satisfactory to the country if the loan proposals of the Government had been preceded by a scheme to provide for the payment of the interest. If the Government were sincere in regard to their proposals, they would have afforded hon. members the opportunity of examining the Engineer-in-Chief for Railways at the bar of the House, in reference to the discrepancy between his estimates and the Premier's with regard to branch lines, and also as to whether there was a reasonable probability of the various lines being constructed at the sums estimated. The Government should have come down and said candidly that they could not state where the trunk lines would go, but that a certain sum would probably be required, and that next year they would come down with definite loan pro-

posals; and, in the meantime, they could ask for a loan sufficient to carry on works already authorised, and the surveys of the new lines proposed to be made. He did not object to the extension of the main trunk lines, but he did protest against their being undertaken on indefinite proposals as to destination and interest. Again, with regard to the branch lines, there was no finality, and as a further reason why the matter should be fully considered, it was evident that the Government themselves had not arrived at any definite conclusion as to the routes these lines should take. He could also point to the branch of the Central Railway to Clermont, for which £50,000 was put down. That amount would only carry that line a comparatively short distance, and would certainly be expended within the period specified by the Treasurer over which this loan should extend. It was now twenty minutes to 4 o'clock in the morning, and, as he had a great deal more to say, especially with regard to the making of railways by land grants, which he did not wish to be lost upon hon. gentlemen who were absent or asleep, he should move that the Chairman leave the chair.

Mr. GARRICK said the Government and their supporters, as they lay asleep upon the opposite benches, presented an appearance typical of their attitude all through the session—"Wake me up and I'll vote," and he supposed they would now rouse up and try to force their opinions upon the minority.

Question—That the Chairman leave the chair—put and negatived, on division: Ayes, 6; Noes, 21.

Mr. DICKSON, continuing his speech, expressed regret that the division just taken had not had the result of enabling members to get away to their homes.

Mr. BEATTIE called attention to the state of the Committee—quorum formed.

Mr. DICKSON said he had pointed out that the amount of this loan would not be sufficient to cover the period of three or four years, as contemplated by the Treasurer, and that consequently he would have to again come to the House for a further loan to complete these works. He had also pointed out that there was no finality about these lines, which committed the country to very large expenditure; that there was no provision for railway surveys; that there was no destination specified in connection with any of these lines; and, also, that the Chief Engineer of Railways should have been examined at the bar of the House as to the feasibility of these railways being made at the price mentioned. If the Treasurer was anxious to refer to these matters he (Mr. Dickson) would resume his seat, but he presumed the hon. gentleman would do so when he

addressed the Committee on the question generally. With regard to the construction of railways by means of land grants, that system was advocated by the Treasurer in his Financial Statement. The hon. gentleman, in his first Financial Statement, spoke of 500 miles of railway which had been abridged to 390 miles; did he mean to build the other 110 miles by loan or by land grants? The House was certainly entitled to information on these points.

Mr. SWANWICK called attention to the state of the Committee—quorum formed.

After further discussion,

Mr. DICKSON moved that the Chairman report progress.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 5; Noes, 21.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. DICKSON resumed his address, remarking that a transcontinental railway had definiteness about it; it had a clear idea of where it was to lead and also of what the cost would be. It was necessary to look beyond the necessities of the present hour.

Mr. BEATTIE called attention to the state of the Committee (5.50 a.m.).

Quorum formed; and debate resumed by Mr. STUBLEY.

Mr. DICKSON suggested that, in order to arrive at some idea as to the probable cost of the railways, it would be desirable to examine the Engineer-in-Chief at the bar of the House. He trusted the Premier—it being close upon 7 o'clock—would now see his way to adjourn till 3 o'clock, when private members' business might be gone on with; and before Monday the Government might supply that reasonable information which must be given before the vote was allowed to pass.

Mr. DOUGLAS, who said he did not feel capable of speaking against time, read an extract from the *Australian Engineer*, showing that a similar line recently sanctioned in South Australia, on the same gauge as those in the interior, with 40-lb. rails, was estimated to cost £4,392 per mile, exclusive of rolling-stock. That, he considered, might be taken as the average rate at which lines in Australia could be made. To pass the vote for the three trunk lines without any definite information as to whither they were to go would simply be committing the colony to what had been appropriately described as a plunge into space. He trusted that not a mile of railway would be allowed to be made until it was decided as to what particular point on the South Australian border was aimed at.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that in *Hansard* of this morning he noticed that the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) had taken advantage of his temporary

absence to state that he (Mr. Palmer), without making any direct accusation, had led hon. members to believe that if the immigration vote was passed the Loan Estimates would not be pressed further. There was not a single particle of truth in that statement. What he said was, that after passing the immigration vote the Treasurer would go on with the railway vote. It was very extraordinary that the hon. member should take advantage of his temporary absence from the Chamber to make such an utterly incorrect statement.

The Committee adjourned from 7.30 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he should be glad to have some little light thrown upon the proposed extension of the Northern line, as several different routes had been suggested, and he hoped some hon. members would furnish some information on the subject.

Mr. STUBLEY suggested that the money proposed to be expended on the Northern line might be employed to a great deal more advantage to the colony in deepening the Burdekin River, and making it navigable for 500 miles.

Mr. MILES said the question under discussion might lead to very serious consequences to the colony, and he was surprised to hear hon. members treating it in a jocular manner. The Committee was asked to take a leap in the dark which might commit them to a further loan of £3,000,000. The Minister for Works had shown by his answer to a question yesterday that he had no faith in Mr. Ballard's system of construction; and it was very unfair to try to get a large amount of money for the proposed lines on the pretence that they could be constructed at a cost of £3,000 per mile. The Minister for Works, with him, evidently did not believe that Mr. Ballard had effected such a large saving. If the Minister for Works believed that Mr. Ballard had effected the saving he claimed to have made, he was bound to give him the reward that had been promised.

Mr. WALSH said the difficulty in the way of some hon. members seemed to be the want of information as to the destination of the railways and the cost of construction; but sufficient information had been given on the first point, and the Committee had power to limit the expenditure on those lines to £3,000 per mile. He agreed with the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles) that it was necessary that a reform should be introduced, and railways made at a cheaper rate in the future. The general direction the lines would take was known, and the matter of termini was of no moment in the interior, where there were no large centres of trade. He was firmly convinced that the construction of cheap railways would be more to the advantage of the colony than the making of roads. Over black-soil country it was well known

that it was as cheap or cheaper to make railways. From what the hon. member for Darling Downs had said it appeared that he did not believe that Mr. Ballard was a good constructor of cheap railways. The hon. member for Kennedy, he might observe, would sit on that (Ministerial) side of the House if he consulted the best interests of his constituents or of the country. When he (Mr. Walsh) returned to the North he should tell his constituents that until the seat of Government was removed to some other place the business of Parliament could not be properly conducted. It was evidently impossible to conduct the affairs of the colony near Queen street, and the sooner a separation was effected the better.

Mr. MILES would like to ask the Minister for Works whether, if the Government could not get anyone to construct these railways at the estimated cost of £3,000, they meant to carry them out on the small-contract system, for he had a great objection to it. Was this £3,000 a mile to cover the cost of survey, stations, and rolling-stock? In taking the course he was now taking, he was carrying out a pledge given to his constituents that he would never consent to their being taxed to pay for these railways into the interior of the country.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN, after replying to some remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Miles), pointed out that the more experience they had in railway construction the cheaper they could build railways. As an instance of this he might say that the first railway in Ireland cost £63,000 per mile, while the last cost only £5,000 per mile, and was actually better than the first. It was the same here: the first railway constructed in the colony cost something like £16,000 per mile; but contracts were now being let at £3,000, and less, and he believed it would be found that these trunk lines would be constructed for less than that amount per mile.

After an adjournment for twenty minutes, at half-past 11 a.m.,

Mr. GRIMES at some length continued the discussion, and expressed his regret that the Premier had not consented to an adjournment of the question. As they would have to pay their quota of interest on the money required for the construction of the proposed railways, they had a perfect right to demand more information as to the direction in which those lines would go than that they were going towards the "setting sun."

The Committee having adjourned at 12:30 p.m., and resumed at 2 p.m.,

Mr. GRIMES continued his remarks, contending that further information should be supplied by the Government before the vote for railways was agreed to. They had received no information as to the

gauge to be used; nor as to the kind of waggons, whether open or covered; neither had they been told anything of the kind of carriages to be used—whether two storied or of the ordinary description. He hoped the debate might be adjourned till Monday next. The information on lines already authorised being in the possession of the House they might decide that question at once, although he disagreed with some portions of them.

The hon. member (two or three ineffectual attempts being made to count out the House) continued his address upon the western grasses, and the best manner of utilising them, until 3 o'clock p.m., when

The SPEAKER took the chair, read prayers, and adjourned the sitting till the usual time of meeting.