

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 21 AUGUST 1879

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 21 August, 1879.

Victoria Bridge Lands Sale Bill.—Petition.—Motion for Adjournment.—Warwick School of Arts Lands Sale Bill.—Order of Business.—Supply—committee.

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

VICTORIA BRIDGE LANDS SALE BILL.

This Bill was introduced by message from His Excellency the Governor.

PETITION.

Mr. PERSSE presented a petition from Residents on the Logan and Albert Rivers, praying that they might obtain railway construction from some point between South Brisbane and Goodna to the Village of Logan or higher up.

Petition read and received.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. PERSSE moved the adjournment of the House to direct attention to a paragraph appearing in the *Queensland Times* of the 19th instant, in which the hon. member for Bundamba (Mr. Hendren) was reported to have stated at a large public meeting held at Peak Mountain, on last Saturday night, that—

“He (Mr. Hendren) had been pretty well abused at the Harrisville meeting, but he could afford to leave the party who abused him alone. He saw through the Press that the meeting was to be held and their member expected to be there. He then referred to the unreasonableness of expecting him to be present at so many meetings while he had to spend such a great portion of his time in Brisbane, and also to the unkindness of people in saying that he was not doing his best for the electorate. He might tell them that when the question of the Fassifern Railway was proposed the member for Fassifern should have been much more interested in it than he (Mr. Hendren) was; yet

when he asked the member for Fassifern one day, in the smoking-room, if he would help him in the matter he simply said—well, he would not repeat exactly what he said, but he told him that the chances were he would never again be returned for Fassifern, and that he would go in for the trunk line. Perhaps he did not mean it, but that was what he said. Having pressed for the returns and obtained them, he did not see what more he could do till they got some money to be spent on the public account."

He (Mr. Persse) distinctly denied that he had ever had any conversation with the hon. member relative to a trunk line of railway, any branch lines, or any subject whatever, and no member had a right to go to a public meeting and say not only what was discreditable, but a lie. He was sorry the hon. member (Mr. Hendren) was not present to hear him say so. He gave the statement a most distinct denial.

After some remarks from Mr. PRICE, in defence of the absent member,

The question was put and negatived.

WARWICK SCHOOL OF ARTS LANDS SALE BILL.

Mr. HORWITZ brought up the Report of the Select Committee on this Bill, and the Bill was ordered to be read a second time that day week.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. BEATTIE moved—

"That the Bill to provide for an additional Member to the Electoral District of Fortitude Valley be restored to the Paper, and that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for Thursday, the 31st instant."

He said that any remarks he had to make would be made when the Order was restored to the paper; but he reiterated that Fortitude Valley was one of the largest constituencies in the colony—if not the largest, and that as an injustice had been done to it unintentionally, perhaps, the spirit of justice of hon. members would not permit them to single out this constituency, because it was the largest, for an act of injustice, which was of serious injury to the electorate. He looked to hon. members of both sides of the House for their support.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith): I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, whether a motion of this kind can be put. It is an impossible one on the face of it; it has been on the paper since the 24th of July, and it is absurd for us on the 21st of August to pass a resolution saying that a certain thing shall be done on the 31st of last month.

The SPEAKER: There is no rule to prevent a member bringing on a motion which proposes to do a thing that is impossible:

1879—4 q

there is no Standing Order against it, even if the motion be, as the hon. gentleman says, absurd.

The PREMIER said he, of course, accepted the Speaker's ruling; but if the motion was carried, it would, from the terms in which it was couched, come to nothing. He would therefore content himself with moving, as an amendment—

That the consideration of this notice of motion, and all the following notices of motion, and General Business Orders of the Day, be postponed until after the consideration of Orders of the Day, Government Business, No. 1.

In proposing this amendment it would not be necessary for him to say much. The position in which the Government stood was this: They had lost, through the action of the Opposition, not only this week, but last week. It was incontestible that, for no reason that was apparent, they lost the whole of yesterday, and the Government were clearly entitled to have some consideration shown to them. Hon. members on his side of the House having private business on the paper were quite agreeable that the Government business should have precedence to-day, and it would be consistent with the Standing Orders that such precedence should be given. Hon. members on the Opposition side must remember that, as they were the principal cause of the delay in Government business, they had nothing to complain of if their private business was postponed to a future day. This was his reason for moving the amendment, although there was a general reason—namely, that while the Government business was in its present position it was useless to push forward any private business, which was in a more forward state than Government business, and would not suffer from being postponed. He begged to move the amendment.

The SPEAKER: This being a question superseding that before the House, it is not an amendment. The question is, that Orders of the Day, Government Business, be now read.

Mr. DICKSON said he felt justified in saying, and he believed hon. members on both sides of the House would not be able to contradict it, that the custom now sought to be introduced by the Premier was without precedent in the House. It was unprecedented that an attempt should be made to supersede the private business on the day allotted to hon. members for its consideration without their concurrence. The precedent now sought to be established was dangerous, and he regretted that the Government should endeavour to depart from the established custom of the House in this direction. They should remember that if they were able to carry this amendment it would establish a precedent which at some future time might be used powerfully against

themselves, and after the long sittings they had had during this week on Government business, this day at any rate should be devoted, if required, to private business. He should have preferred to have seen the Government adjourn their business when Wednesday's sitting terminated, for they must have seen from the proceedings of last night that any attempt to proceed with the Government business this evening would be a signal waste of time. It would be productive of no practical result, and would only tend to increase bitterness of feeling, while it would not encourage a dispassionate consideration of the large subject introduced on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. It was much to be regretted that the Government should attempt to override private business, for the consideration of which Thursday was specially dedicated. And even if they were in a position to carry out this amendment, they would be establishing a very dangerous precedent. He could not tacitly accept the charges made by the Premier, that the delay in Government business was chargeable to the Opposition side of the House. The Premier was, himself, distinctly to blame for the want of conciliation displayed by him during the last two days, nor could he accept the statement that the debate yesterday on going into Committee of Supply was an intentional waste of time got up with a view to obstruct and retard Government business. It was the outcome of the action of the Premier himself in refusing to adjourn the debate on the no-confidence motion, in order to enable hon. members to speak to the question, and who therefore took a reasonable advantage of the opportunity afforded yesterday to make those speeches which they were unable to deliver on the preceding evening. If the Premier had been content with the vote for immigration, the exhibition of the last twenty-four hours would have been saved—a most unprofitable exhibition, and one which he exceedingly regretted. The Opposition were forced into the position they took up by the stubbornness and want of consideration displayed by the Premier. Parliamentary business could not be conducted without mutual concessions; and it was the duty of the leader of the House to consider objections made from both sides, provided such objections were not urged with a view to obstruction, but to obtain such information as hon. members ought to possess. He regretted that the Premier intended to supersede with the Loan Estimate the legitimate business of the day, more especially as he had hoped that hon. members would have consented to postpone their private business, and the Government would have moved an adjournment till Monday. By adopting such a course the Government could not expect to make any

marked progress, and would only encourage the feeling of resistance towards their Loan Estimates. He knew that no representations from this side would affect the intention of the Government in that direction; but he, individually, protested against such an innovation as that which the Premier was seeking to introduce—an innovation which would form a dangerous precedent, and one which might afterwards tend to his own disadvantage.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said there were plenty of precedents for the course of action now proposed. It was an open secret all over the colony that this obstruction was not only encouraged, but planned by the hon. member (Mr. Dickson). The question appeared to be whether Parliament was to be ruled by a majority or a minority, and he trusted the Premier would be firm in carrying his Loan Estimates through in their present form. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) was perfectly satisfied with the information before the House. If hon. members went on at the present rate the session would last from January to December, whereas four or five months ought to be quite long enough. He was told two months ago, at Warwick, that the Opposition had made up their minds to prevent these Estimates from passing, and the little children at Toowoomba, also, seemed to know all about it: it seemed, indeed, to be a secret only to the hon. member who planned it. He hoped the House would now decide whether it was to be governed by a majority or a minority.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said the Premier had stated that he had been driven to take this step in consequence of the amount of time wasted this week and last week by the Opposition. With regard to that, it must be admitted even by the hon. gentleman that the subject was an important one, involving not only the fate of the Ministry, but settling what was probably the most important question in connection with public works ever brought under the notice of the House. The Premier had certainly arrived at a rather precipitate conclusion, for as yet there had been no lengthened display of obstruction, last night being the first occasion on which the Loan Estimates were brought on. Personally, he was not anxious to delay the granting of a loan vote, for he believed the circumstances of the country were such as to render a loan really necessary. It was necessary that during this session an amount of money should be voted to carry on works now in progress, and there could be no objection to vote money for that or any other object fully disclosed in the Loan Estimates. But they were asked to vote a large sum—although it was not a third of the amount which would eventually be required—to construct railway lines without any information as to whither they were going.

and without surveys and professional estimates. And when the consideration of these matters preceded that of other matters of more pressing importance, it was not surprising that they offered considerable resistance to the passing of such a vote. He was not an advocate for Government by minority; but it was necessary at times, even to gain time, for a minority to avail itself of every form of Parliamentary usage. The present Government were committing the colony to a reckless course of policy which was not justified by any fact with which the House was at present acquainted. More than that, the official business of the Government was in a backward state. No provision had been made for the Divisional Boards Bill, and without it what was the present financial position of the Government? Nothing had yet been heard with regard to the repeal of a portion of the Railway Reserves Act, which was a cardinal part of their policy, and upon which this vote also hung. The repealing Bill had not been even introduced. Such being the case, surely they were justified in taking their stand, and insisting on knowing more about these railways than had yet been vouchsafed to them. On the most paltry details of the ordinary Estimates it was the privilege of Parliament to obtain information from the Executive; and yet in an affair of this magnitude, involving double, and, in the opinion of many competent judges, even more than double, the amount asked for, they were not vouchsafed with the scratch of a pen. Minorities might be driven into a position where they must take their stand, and resist until they got the information to which they were entitled. From the commencement of his official career the Premier had shown that he intended to carry everything by the force of his majority—not by reason, or persuasion, or conciliation, or even by giving that information which Parliament might fairly demand, and without which it could not fulfil its functions. It was a form of compulsion. They were denied information to which they were entitled. There had never been a railway proposed here about which such little information was given, and the modicum of information given by the hon. gentleman ran counter to all experience. The Premier told them the railways could be built for £2,700 a mile, while all experience showed that railways of the construction proposed would cost at least £5,000 a mile, and might cost more. He did not grumble at the price, if it could be shown that the lines were required; but he did object to a false pretence like this—a false pretence of the grossest kind. The hon. gentleman overrode the opinion of his own Engineer-in-Chief, and asked the House to accept his dictum as being superior in weight to the

experience of a professional engineer. The money was asked for without any guarantee that it would be expended on any definite project, and that was a most unusual and unjustifiable course—although, certainly, it was consistent with his actions since he had assumed the reins of Government. When a demand was made for any small work connected with the Estimates they succeeded generally in obtaining it, even if it resulted in considerable delay; and surely they ought to be entitled to something like detailed information when it was an amount involving millions—involving the future welfare of the people inhabiting Queensland. The hon. gentleman had also said he did not intend to make any special provision for the liability he wished to incur. When the representatives of the people saw staring before them a great increase in the public burdens, and that there must be a large addition to the public revenue to meet it, they had an inherent right to know in what way that extra revenue was to be raised. There was no right more precious, and yet here was a proposition which inevitably involved increased taxation in the settled districts, or else a revision of the leases under which the Crown lands of the colony were held, and yet the Premier violated it. He said, "Let us have the money first, and we will show you how the taxes are to be levied." The Opposition replied, "Let us see our ways and means of revising the tenure of the Crown lands." If that were not done it would be unsound policy to justify any such large expenditure. Once let the vote be passed, and it was not a question of this year, or next year, but of the next ten years; and it would not involve an expenditure of a million only, but of three or four millions. They were asked to extend the lines 130 miles each. Probably that meant 300 miles. Such being the case, the Government had nothing to gain in pressing the matter now; but if the Government chose to force them in this reckless way into an expenditure which the present circumstances of the colony did not justify, upon them must rest the responsibility. The Government might cheerfully accept that responsibility now; but even if the Premier succeeded in having his way in this matter, he (Mr. Douglas) would never consent that the inhabitants of the country should bear the increased burden which would inevitably result from the adoption of this policy. If there should be any increased burden, it should be relieved from Crown lands and rents alone. The resistance which had been offered was not unreasonable. There might have been a less serious air pervading the recent debate at times, but beneath there was a serious determination to give full consideration to matters of great importance to the people of the colony. The

sympathy of a vast majority of the population was towards the reasonable opposition being offered. The sound sense of those who were in every way the most substantial and thoughtful men of the colony was opposed to precipitate action in the matter. It was the general desire that a matter of such importance should be well thought out and thoroughly discussed; and those hon. members who now opposed those resolutions were backed by the intelligence and good sense of the majority of the people of the colony. There was evidently a mode of action open to the hon. gentleman. The large vote might be postponed, and the House would be very happy to discuss and pass many of the smaller items. With regard to carrying out the extensions of lines already authorised there could be no reasonable opposition. The House knew where they were going to and what might be expected with regard to them; but with regard to the new proposals the House knew nothing of the kind. The Premier suggested that he should move an amendment to anything he did not like, but his objection applied equally to the three trunk lines, as the House had not been told the destination of any one of them, nor supplied with any details as to the mode of construction. He had desired to ask the Minister for Works serious questions as to speed and form of permanent-way, but the whole nature of the preceding debate had been such as to render all serious discussion difficult. If the subject was to be further discussed the hon. Minister for Works should give such information as the House was entitled to have. The Chief Engineer (Mr. Stanley) had written a valuable paper on the economical construction of railways, and hon. members would like to know whether it was proposed to adopt that gentleman's views or those of Mr. Ballard. In some respects those two engineers agreed, in others they differed, and it was desirable that the House should have information on all points. If the proposed vote were once passed the whole question would be settled. Though he had very little hope of persuading the Premier, he felt justified in expressing the opinion that the proposed alterations of order of business would not be productive of much good.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) had given as one reason why the recent business should not be resumed that the Government business paper was not so forward as to warrant the Premier in pushing on the Loan Estimates. It was certainly unfortunate, both for the Government and the House, that the Government business was not so far forward as it should be, but whose fault was that? The Premier read a statement last night showing the number of sitting days which had been

devoted to Government business, and the number that had been consumed by the Opposition in debating the general policy of the Government, the railway policy included. Had there ever before been a session since this colony first had a Parliament when, out of thirty-four Government business days, sixteen or seventeen had been taken up by the Opposition debating the Government policy? There had been no such precedent in this colony, nor did he think elsewhere. So far from his objection being a good one, it was a strong objection against the course the hon. gentleman had taken, and in which he was assisted by other hon. members. The hon. gentleman also said that this was a form of compulsion; but he (Mr. Macrossan) appealed to the Speaker, and to every common-sense man, whether parliamentary government itself was not a form of compulsion existing in every country where parliamentary government was in force? Where, during the whole history of Parliament, had it been permitted to minorities to dictate to the Government? When such a state of affairs was arrived at the minority became the Government and the Government became the minority—in fact, it was simply one of those nice phrases which the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) was very much in the habit of using. The hon. gentleman also complained that the Government had not vouchsafed to give sufficient information with regard to these lines and the direction in which they were to go. The chief objection seemed to be, not so much to the form of the Estimate as to the fact that no objective points had been named. In all those railway extensions and branch lines there was not a single independent railway in the lot—every one had some connection with the present system of railways; so that, in reality, there was not a single new line—like the Maryborough and Gympie and the Bundaberg and Mount Perry projected by the hon. gentleman—having an independent system of its own. Each of them joined or connected lines already in existence. The hon. gentleman also found fault with the amount asked for the three extensions; but he seemed to forget all about the project he brought down to the House in 1877, which included three independent lines. Such lines necessarily entailed a much greater amount of expenditure, and the sum to which the country was committed at that time was nearly double the amount now asked for extending these three main lines. The sum then voted was over £2,000,000, and yet the hon. gentleman now objects to the Government bringing forward a scheme of this kind, because, he said, the time was inopportune;—at some other time he would be prepared to go on with extensions of that kind, and even now he would be prepared to continue them

under different circumstances. The hon. gentleman had very little to complain of on the score of want of information. He must remember—what hon. members seemed to forget—that the Government could not make a single mile of any line before the plans and sections were placed on the table of the House and approved by Parliament. Another objection was that the country would be committed to an unknown expenditure per mile, and the hon. gentleman said the estimates were not honest ones, because he believed the Government were not able to make railways at £3,000 per mile. He (Mr. Macrossan) maintained that they were able to do so, and he was justified in saying so by the authority he had quoted on the occasion of the no-confidence motion, and also by the statement he then made with regard to the last contracts entered into in Victoria. But there was no necessity to refer to other colonies to find out the rate at which railways could be constructed per mile. At the present moment the Government were constructing a section on the Central line at a less cost than £3,000 per mile, and the engineer in charge of that line stated positively that he could make the remainder of the line—the 130 miles extension—at the rate of £3,000 per mile; and he staked his reputation upon doing so. When a professional man was willing to stake his reputation and his emoluments—which was more, he being a poor man—upon his ability to construct that line and complete it—putting it in as good state as the portion already constructed, as far as the Alice River, for £3,000 per mile, the Government were justified in their estimate. Further than that, he might inform the hon. gentleman—who as a member of the late Ministry must have known it—that so far from plans not being in existence they were prepared up to twenty miles beyond the extent of the present contract, which had been let since he left office—and that they were ready to be laid upon the table of the House before he left office himself. He (Mr. Macrossan) had now the authority of the engineer of that line to state that at the present moment plans were on the way from Rockhampton for an extension to sixty-three miles beyond the present contract to the 200-mile peg. Mr. Ballard had telegraphed to him two days ago as followed—

“I find that on 20th August last year I despatched to Commissioner parliamentary plans and sections in duplicate one hundred and ninety-seven miles to two hundred and twenty, being a distance of twenty-three miles Central Railway, which you can at once lay on the table. By end of August I will furnish you with another forty miles to the other side the Belyando River, viz., to two hundred sixty-mile peg. These, with the works now under consideration, will provide for a distance of ninety-five miles beyond present terminus at Emerald.”

Since receiving that telegram he had got another one from Mr. Ballard as followed—

“20th August, 1879.

“I have despatched this day to Commissioner for Railways, parliamentary plans and sections, Central Railway, to two hundred and sixty miles, being five miles beyond Belyando River, and ninety-five miles beyond present terminus.”

The other evening the hon. gentleman denied having heard that even a gap had been found in the range; but this clearly showed that plans were prepared to twenty to twenty-five miles beyond that point. The Belyando was eighteen to twenty miles from the western side of the Drummond Range, and plans were prepared to five miles beyond the Belyando; and yet the hon. gentleman said that the Government had no plans and no gap had been found in the range.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was aware that a gap had been proposed, but did not understand that it had been proved to be the best point at which to cross the range. He simply referred to a statement made by the Commissioner for Railways, in this year's report, in reference to the Central Railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman was now aware that not only had a practicable gap been found, but that a survey had been made over twenty-five miles on the western side of the range. The hon. gentleman ought also to know that the Commissioner's report, although published this year, was drawn up for last year, and only dealt with railway matters to December, 1878. With regard to the Southern and Western line, the Government were able to lay on the table of the House plans for fifty-two miles beyond Roma—that was to say, to Mitchell.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Are you going in that direction?

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What is all the hear-hearing about? Those plans will be laid on the table of the House. Mitchell is due west from Roma. It will rest with the House to approve the plans.

Mr. DOUGLAS: We have never been told that the line would be taken to Mitchell.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman knew well that the survey had been made to Mitchell, and that it was made by order of his own Government; and he also knew that Mitchell was due west from Roma. The Government proposed an extension of 130 miles west from Roma; and the natural conclusion was that, going west from Roma, the line would go to Mitchell. With regard to the cost of that line, a portion was being made between Dalby and Roma at a cost of more than £4,000 per mile; and the hon. gentleman doubted the ability of the Government to make any line for £3,000 per mile,

because the present line was costing over £4,000; and, also, because contracts had been made, according to the quotations of the hon. gentleman, to construct lines for more than £4,000 per mile elsewhere. Since addressing the House the other evening, he (Mr. Macrossan) had received a telegram from a contractor who had made many miles of railway—why he had telegraphed to him he (Mr. Macrossan) did not know, as, though he knew the name, he had never had any communication with the gentleman on the subject—stating that

“He would be prepared, if Government would accept offer, to construct 130 miles extension railway from Roma similar to present construction, including supply of permanent-way and material, at £3,000 per mile.”

MR. GABRICK: Hear, hear. Name?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he should not give the name, because the gentleman said, “You can use this offer without giving name in Brisbane. In a few days I will see you.” That gentleman had had experience enough to warrant him (Mr. Macrossan) in saying he thought that gentleman was capable, and that he himself believed he was capable of carrying out his offer. As to the Charters Towers line, the information of the Government was certainly less than in the case of the other two, because the line was in a less advanced state. He had reason to believe, from his own knowledge of the country west of Charters Towers, and from the opinions of men whose knowledge was greater than his, that the line could be made for the same sum per mile as the extensions from Emerald Downs and Roma. The hon. gentleman had made some remarks about Hughenden. In taking that line west it must come near to that town. Although not due west, but a little south of west from Charters Towers, it was, by measurement on the latest map issued by the Lands offices, just about 130 miles distant. The hon. gentleman said something about the line going from Hughenden to Muttaborra, which would be making it describe the two sides of a right-angle triangle.

MR. DOUGLAS: I presumed it was to be made to Hughenden, and wished to know what direction it would afterwards take—north, south, or west?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government had never given the hon. gentleman any reason to believe that it was their intention to carry the line either north or south from Hughenden. By taking the line to the Alice River they would be bringing it to the very point to which the Central line would run.

MR. DOUGLAS said he understood that was why the hon. member for the Mitchell wished it to be carried to there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Hughenden was a little south of west from Charters

Towers, and was the objective point as nearly as it could be placed. The hon. member for Cook had referred to those little inland towns. They were not objective points to make railways to. They generally consisted of a public-house, a store, and a blacksmith's shop, and were not objective points to be fought about in the House. The plans of the Charters Towers line would be ready as far as Charters Towers before the end of this session. He had been challenged with not having given full information, but he had given a sufficient amount of information on the subject to warrant the House in voting the money for the making of those lines until the plans themselves could be laid on the table of the House. But the Premier the other evening, in justification of his action, quoted the conduct of the Minister for Works in New South Wales upon the occasion that 7½ millions were voted for the making of railways. His statement was then questioned by several members of the House, and since then the Premier had taken the precaution to telegraph to the Minister for Works in Sydney upon that point. The following telegram was sent to the Hon. John Lackey, Secretary for Public Works, Sydney, on the 14th instant:—

“Will you kindly reply to the following queries:—Have the railway lines from Dubbo to Bourke, Gunnedah to Narrabri, Wallerawang to Mudgee, and Narrandera to Hay been surveyed? If so, are surveys preliminary or permanent? Were plans and sections of above lines on table of House when your last Loan Estimates passed, or what official information as to cost, character, and direction of each line?”

The answer received from Mr. Lackey on the next day was as follows:—

“Preliminary surveys of the railway lines—Dubbo to Bourke, Gunnedah to Narrabri, and Wallerawang to Mudgee have been made. No survey has been made of line—Narrandera to Hay. Plans and sections were not on table at the time of passing of Loan Estimates. The House affirms the principle of certain extensions on Loan Estimates on approximate estimate of distance and cost per mile, which are all subject to approval of Parliament when subsequent resolution is submitted, accompanied by final plans, sections, and books of reference.”

That was conclusive enough, as far as the action of New South Wales was concerned. The telegrams that he had read in regard to the Central line, the offer of a contractor to make the Southern and Western extension for £3,000 per mile, and Mr. Ballard's affirmation that he could make the Central line for the same amount, justified the estimate of the Government, even if they had no other data—but they had other data. He (Mr. Macrossan) stated the other evening that contracts had

been let in Victoria for £3,000 per mile. The hon. member for Maryborough denied the statement; the leader of the Opposition did the same, and challenged the Government to prove it. The hon. member for Maryborough quoted certain contracts, but they were old ones. He would read from an official publication, signed by the Victorian Minister for Works and the Chief Engineer of Railways in Victoria, particulars of the contracts let within the last year—the latest contracts that were known in this colony as having been let in Victoria. The first related to the line from Stawell to Horsham. He knew the country personally, and knew that it was not a bit easier for railway-making than the western country of Queensland; it was similar kind of country, in fact. A contract had been let from Stawell to Murton, which was on the way to Horsham; the length of line was 36·257 miles; the total contract price was £77,999, or an average of £2,151 per mile, and it included everything with the exception of station buildings, rails, points, and fastenings for permanent-way. A telegraph line was also included, and the line was to be worked for three months after its completion to the satisfaction of the Engineer-in-Chief. He had no objection to put the particulars on the table, but hon. members would know the difference between putting on the table the schedules of the prices of the contractors of this colony and of the contractors of another colony. The whole of the permanent-way and material would amount to £750 per mile on the calculation of Mr. Stanley, and the total cost of the railway would therefore be £2,963 per mile. Here they had a railway 5 feet 3 inches gauge, with 60-lb. rails per yard and a telegraph line included, built for £2,963 per mile; yet the hon. member for Maryborough called their estimates dishonest because they professed to make railways for £3,000 per mile—railways with a 3-foot-6-inch gauge, and requiring only 41½-lb. rails per yard. The leader of the Opposition also challenged them to prove that contracts had been let in Victoria for £3,000 per mile, and he now had the proof. The cost of the other part of the line—the part from Murton to Horsham—was £3,085 per mile, including everything but the station buildings, and including, also, a telegraph line; yet when the Government proposed to make 3-foot-6-inch gauge railways, requiring only 41½-lb. rails per yard, in a similar country with engineers equally as good as Victoria had, and with the same means of obtaining labour and material, their estimate was challenged as dishonest. He could also give particulars of another Victorian contract. From Dunolly to St. Arnaud, country more difficult than the one he had

been alluding to, a contract had been let for thirty-two miles of railway for £71,974, or an average of £2,181 per mile; adding £750 to provide the same additions as in the other lines, the cost would be £2,931 per mile. The total length of the three lines was 86 miles 40 chains and 78 links; the total cost was £190,245, or an average of £2,945 per mile, being a little less than the estimate the Government here professed to make railways of a 3-foot-6-inch gauge. Were they not justified in bringing down an estimate for £3,000 per mile when they knew that railways were being built here for that sum, and that it was being done elsewhere? No information could be got from Victoria later than what he had given. He would admit that the hon. member for Maryborough was quite correct as to the contracts that he had referred to; but, as he had told him at the time, they were progressing in railway matters, and he had no doubt that they should yet approach to making railways for the lower sum stated by the leader of the Opposition. Then why should the Government be challenged, and be said to be dishonest because they believed that railways could be made for the sum named on the Estimates? As to the branch lines, he felt quite confident that when they were able to make trunk lines at £3,000 per mile, that they were equally honest when they said they could make branch lines through similar country for at least a little under £3,000. It would be wiser for hon. members opposite, knowing as they did that in all the interests of parliamentary government the minority must give way, to now cease objecting to the passing of these Estimates. They had satisfied their consciences in making their protests. They had protested loudly for twenty-four hours, and they had discharged their duty as far as they believed they were compelled to, on behalf of the country and their constituents, and he hoped that the obstruction would cease. It was full time that the Government had the power to go into the market to borrow money. He regretted that hon. members opposite seemed to forget the great legacy which they had left the Government in the shape of maintaining labouring men in employment. That seemed to have escaped their memories, if it was ever known to them. He made the assertion two months ago that they were maintaining a certain number of men in the colony through public works. It had been challenged outside and inside, but the figures that he then gave were far below the actual facts. He found from returns which he had got that there were nearly 10,000 people at present living upon the expenditure of Government money in this colony; and of these 10,000 people about 9,000 were adult males. With the fact staring them in the face that one-fifth of

the male adult population of the country was living upon Government expenditure, hon. members opposite were acting suicidally in preventing the Government from borrowing money so as to ease off gradually this enormous load that was weighing upon the country and preventing the catastrophe that would take place by a sudden stoppage of public works. Nothing could be more criminal than the conduct of hon. members, when they knew that if, at the present time or any time within the next twelve months, public works were stopped, the colony would have to go through a crisis to which that of 1866 was nothing. They must go on with public works. He did not say that they could always continue at the same rate; but, if they increased population and governed the country as economically as they ought, they might do so safely. They could not afford, however, to stop public works at present, or the extensions that were proposed. Suppose that the extensions which they had asked for did not pass the House, a certain number of people would be thrown out of employment. A large number of men were at present employed on the western extension as far as Roma, which works would be finished at the end of the year, Mr. Bashford having entered into an agreement to have the line open by the 1st of January. Upon the Central line a contract had been let for twenty-seven miles, which would not take a very long time to finish, seeing the nature of the country; and that contract had been let whilst the small-contract system was being wound up on the line. If through the action of the Opposition a large number of men were thrown idle it would be the cause of a terrible calamity both in the south-western and central parts of the colony. He did not wish to contemplate anything of the kind, because he knew how it would react, not only upon the portions of the country immediately adjacent to where the men were working, but upon Brisbane and every town in the colony. The labour-market would be glutted and the wages of the labouring classes would inevitably fall. As a matter of precaution and prevention, they were bound to go on with these extensions. He had every confidence in the resources of the colony, and although they were at present suffering a depression he was satisfied their resources were such that if properly husbanded, and if the Government of the country was properly and economically worked, they could go on constructing lines so long as they did not construct too many in one year and have too much money lying unproductive. They could do it with perfect safety, and he hoped the hon. member for Maryborough would withdraw whatever objection he had to the passing

of this vote. He (Mr. Macrossan) must have satisfied him as to the *bona fides* of the Government. He had given him all the information he possessed, and the rest of the information, as regarded plans, would be laid upon the table of the House for the approval of hon. members, who would accordingly be placed in a position to discuss them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he rose simply to correct the hon. member for Maryborough for the third time. The hon. member knew perfectly well that his statement that he (Mr. Morehead) approved of an extension of the Northern Railway from Hughenden to Muttaborra was incorrect, and that he had been twice told by him it was so. On the previous occasion that the contradiction was given, he (Mr. Morehead) appealed to the Chairman of Committees as to whether the hon. member was insane or not. The hon. member would repeat what he knew to be untrue—what he had invented himself.

Mr. DOUGLAS rose to a point of order. The hon. member had stated that he (Mr. Douglas) had made a statement which he knew to be not true. Such language should not be permitted, and he begged to call the Speaker's attention to it.

The SPEAKER said he did not hear the remarks complained of; but if the hon. member made use of the words "not true," he was bound to recall them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should withdraw them at once, in compliance with the Speaker's ruling; but he would point out to the House that he could not see how hon. members could protect themselves against slanders unless by contradicting them in the House. The hon. member knew that his statement had been twice contradicted, and nothing had been brought forward by him in confirmation of it. He most emphatically denied that he held such an absurd opinion as had been attributed to him. He was astonished that the hon. member should have repeated it, for he must have known that an allusion was made to his sanity on the occasion of one contradiction. He should be inclined to repeat that allusion now, and, if it were parliamentary, to say that the hon. member was not sane. The statement was an absurdity, which could only have originated in the hon. member's imagination.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he had no wish to misrepresent any hon. member. A great many things were said during the heat of debate last night which were nothing more than chaff; and, if he had unconsciously stated anything that offended the hon. gentleman, he was quite willing to withdraw it.

Mr. WALSH said he was present in the House when the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) made the remarks referred to, and he could say that they were made

jocularly, and he thought the hon. member for Mitchell had misconstrued their meaning. He hoped, after the speech of the Minister for Works, they would proceed with the Loan Estimates, and do some substantial work. It was to be hoped they would see no more of the miserable exhibitions that they had seen during the last four-and-twenty hours, and that they would now proceed with the business of the country. The facts stated by the Minister for Works, which he took it could not be disputed, supplied hon. members opposite with the information they wanted, and, having obtained that, he hoped they would proceed with the passing of these Estimates.

Mr. STEVENSON said notwithstanding the desire of the hon. member to pour oil on the troubled waters, he could not see how the hon. member for Mitchell had misconstrued the statement of the hon. member for Maryborough at an early hour that morning. The hon. member for Mitchell then denied that statement, and why should the hon. member for Maryborough repeat it? As to whether it was jocular or not the hon. member for Mitchell had nothing to do, and he did not see that the hon. member for Mitchell could do otherwise than he had done.

Mr. GARRICK supposed it was of no avail to ask the occupants of the Treasury benches to abstain from depriving private members of their business day and devoting it to Government business? This course was an extremely exceptional one, entirely without precedent in the annals of our Parliament, and therefore it was for the Ministry to show that there were unprecedented reasons for it. But the only reason the Premier had advanced for adopting this course was that the Opposition wasted last week and last night. He would ask hon. members whether that was correct or not?

Mr. WALSH: Yes.

Mr. GARRICK said hon. members like the hon. member for Cook, who assumed to be so very fair, were the very best partisans, and one of their best cloaks was their apparent fairness. The Premier stated that the Opposition wasted last week, but he would point out that last week the most important business of the session was brought before them. They were asked to authorise the construction of a large number of railways, and to authorise a loan of three millions, and at the same time it was admitted that this was for the continuation, and not by any means the completion, of these main trunk lines;—that, as stated by the hon. member for Ipswich (Mr. Thompson), having got into the wilderness they must continue there until they reached a paying point. He maintained that under these circumstances the Opposition were perfectly justified by the course they adopted last week, and they were also justified by the number of votes they had on division.

He denied that the Opposition wasted last night, and maintained that it was spent in a proper and manly protest against being subdued by physical force; and he hoped that, whenever that effort was repeated, it would be met by the same course that was adopted last night. On Tuesday night the Government and their supporters endeavoured to stifle debate by forcing a division, although there were members on the Opposition side of the House who desired and were entitled to speak, and those members were perfectly justified in availing themselves of the first legitimate opportunity to address the House, and speaking last night. The Opposition had been blamed for the delay in public business, but he maintained that whatever business had been done this session had been practically done by the Opposition. The Government brought down Bills in such a hashed condition that it became the duty of the Opposition to try and amend those Bills, and they did that duty fairly and manfully.

Attention called to the state of the House—quorum formed.

Mr. GARRICK said the Minister for Works had read some telegrams received from the Minister for Works in New South Wales; and he (Mr. Garrick) would ask that hon. gentleman why he had not placed that information in the possession of the House before this afternoon? It was information they were entitled to receive; and what was the difference between the case here and the case in New South Wales? It did not appear that the Minister for Works, in New South Wales, had working plans of parts of the line he intended to propose to the House; but still the Government asked the House to authorise a loan. But what was the position of the Minister for Works here? He had now told the House that he had plans of the Southern and Western line to Mitchell; and also working plans of sixty-three miles beyond Retreat, on the Central line; and he (Mr. Garrick) asked, was it not the duty of that hon. gentleman, before asking the House to consent to a loan for the construction of those lines, to place the plans upon the table of the House? He maintained that it was, and that he should have given every possible information with respect to those lines.

Attention called to the state of the House—quorum formed.

Mr. GARRICK, continuing, said that the Minister for Works appeared to him to have gone backwards in his proposal, by asking the House to grant a loan for the making of these lines when he should have laid the plans upon the table.

Attention called to the state of the House—quorum formed.

Mr. GARRICK said the Secretary for Works had made a very great deal about

the number of workmen engaged upon these lines, who he said would be thrown out of employment if the course adopted by the Opposition were carried out, but the hon. gentleman knew well that that was a perfect fallacy.

Attention called to the state of the House—quorum formed.

Mr. GARRICK said the hon. gentleman, no doubt, wished that statement to go throughout the length and breadth of the land in order to prejudice the Opposition in the eyes of the people; but he knew, when making that statement, that there was no foundation whatever for it. The Government knew perfectly well that there were many items in the Loan Estimates that the Opposition were ready and prepared to accede to. They had admitted that they were prepared to go in for a loan sufficient to enable the Government to carry on public works at the present rate of expenditure for, at any rate, two years, so that there was no necessity, even in the view the Opposition took, for discharging a single man at present in the employment of the Government. He repeated that the policy of the Opposition was known upon that point. They would not accede to a loan for three millions, or to all the lines that the Government proposed; but they were prepared to construct certain lines, and what they were prepared to give, added to the money already in hand standing to the credit of loan, would be sufficient to carry on public works for two years, and keep every hand at present in the employment of the Government still in that employment. So that the intimation of the Minister for Works, that the action of the Opposition would result in the discharge of these workmen, was a complete fallacy. But the hon. gentleman, when talking in that way, had forgotten altogether the general taxpayer. He had stated that enough rent was got from the pastoral lessees to pay the interest upon the money that had been expended on the construction of railways, but it had been well pointed out the equivalent those lessees received. He noticed on the business paper a motion by the hon. member for Blackall (Mr. Archer) to grant indefeasible leases to lessees in the unsettled districts. He thought they had had enough of indefeasible leases.

Mr. AMHURST rose to a point of order. The hon. member was discussing a motion on the paper for a future day, and he (Mr. Amhurst) would ask if he were in order?

The SPEAKER said he did not think the hon. member was out of order. He did not understand him to be discussing the merits of the motion of the hon. member for Blackall. The debate had turned very largely upon financial matters, and a great

many subjects might be taken into consideration in discussing questions of finance.

Mr. AMHURST asked if the hon. member was at liberty to go into the motion of the hon. member for Blackall in all its details?

The SPEAKER said the hon. member could not discuss the merits of the motion, but he might refer to the subject.

Mr. GARRICK said that when he was interrupted by the hon. member, he was saying that the Opposition were not opposed to a loan, but that they were entitled to demand from the hon. Treasurer a guarantee that no part of the interest of such a loan would be likely to fall on the already over-taxed ratepayers of the colony. In the tables attached to the hon. Treasurer's Financial Statement there was a comparative statement of the taxation of the various Australian colonies; and, on reference to those tables, hon. members would see that, taking taxation through the Customs, the most heavily taxed people were the working men of Queensland. He could show at once by the statement made by the Colonial Treasurer, that the people of the colony were not so heavily taxed now as they were in 1874. And who, he would ask, were in office from the end of 1874 up to the beginning of the present year but the Liberal Ministry? It was after some such a fight as they were now threatened with—one which, he hoped, would eventuate in the same way—that there was an appeal to the country, in reply to which there was an overwhelming manifestation of almost abhorrence of the squatting party then in power. The result of that appeal was this, that after the present Colonial Secretary met the House he remained only in office some four or five days. The country to which the hon. gentleman then appealed showed no uncertainty in the result, and the hon. gentleman and his colleagues had to pack up their carpet-bags and trot across to the Opposition side of the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What did you do the other day?

Mr. GARRICK said that no such general expression of opinion had been given on that occasion. They had been told lately by members of the Government that the country was in favour of their policy; but those hon. gentlemen knew better than to give the Opposition a chance of trying that question, notwithstanding all that the Government had done on a previous occasion, and notwithstanding the Colonial Secretary's familiarity with the manipulation of elections and with the proper way of dealing with popular constituencies and their weaknesses. The hon. gentleman, in his younger days, as he (Mr. Garrick) well remembered, was renowned for his can-

dour, but there was hardly so much of that candour now, owing to the company the hon. gentleman had been keeping. He was afraid he was too simple for the ways of the hon. gentleman. The hon. Minister for Lands had just made some remark, but when the time came for the hon. gentleman to take up his carpet-bag and trot over to the Opposition benches he would not be overweighted with his honesty in that respect. He knew that hon. gentleman's powers, and, although he had been very quiet of late, that calm might betoken a storm. He could not imagine a prettier conflict than one between the Colonial Secretary and that hon. gentleman; and how those two hon. members had so long kept together on terms, apparently, of peace must be a mystery to everyone. Coming back to the policy of the Government, he would again repeat that the Opposition were prepared to meet them in all fairness. They had never shown, in fact, any other spirit; and if there had been any spirit of unfairness it had been provoked by the action of the Government towards them. The last division on the amendment moved by the hon. and learned member for North Brisbane showed at once that the Opposition were a very powerful minority, as they were within three of the Government numbers, and it was very well known how few of the Government supporters who voted on that particular question represented the feelings of their constituents. The twenty-three who voted for the Opposition on that occasion represented the largest part of the population of the colony and the most populous constituencies within it; and it was very well known that many of the members who voted with the Government on that occasion, who were the representatives of populous constituencies, did not then represent the wishes of those constituencies. If the Government would only give the Opposition a chance of going to the country—as he wished they would do instead of sitting laughing at the interests of the country and the wishes of the people—there was no doubt whatever that the Opposition would come back with a majority to that House. He would not go through the different constituencies, or refer to hon. members opposite, or say a single word about Brisbane or how wonderfully well it was represented by the Colonial Secretary at the present time. He was sure there was a perfect accord between the hon. gentleman and that constituency; at the same time, if the hon. gentleman sought the votes of that constituency again he would not be returned. He believed that if the whole of that constituency were to petition the hon. gentleman to give them another opportunity of expressing their opinions of him as a representative the hon. gentleman would tell them that he would do nothing of the kind.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will contest it with you at any time.

Mr. GARRICK said he had never influenced a single voter or elector to express any opinion about his representative, and he did not intend to do so, as constituents were generally pretty acute in finding out those things for themselves; and they did not want to be educated to find fault with their representatives. However, returning to the question, he would once more inquire whether there was any use in asking the Government to reconsider their intentions, and whether they would withdraw the amendment and let hon. members proceed with business in the ordinary manner? He considered hon. members were justified in refusing to talk about anything else but private business that evening, as the Government had deprived private members of what was especially their day. Then, again, there was some very important business to be done. The hon. member for Stanley, for instance, had a very important Bill on the paper—one in which great interest was taken by members of the House, and also by people outside of it. He referred to the Bill for the disqualification of Civil Servants. He regretted extremely, on that ground, to hear that the hon. member was willing to give way to the Government by postponing the second reading of that Bill. There was, also, another matter on the paper which was of great importance, as it had reference to the comfort of a large number of people—that was, a motion of the hon. member for running morning and evening trains on Sundays. He (Mr. Garrick) was favourably impressed with that motion, and he regretted that the consideration of it should be postponed for even a single day, and that the hon. member was not assisting the Opposition in asserting the rights of private members to proceed only with their business. The Government were establishing what might become a precedent; they were doing that day what the Opposition at no very distant date might do when they were in the majority; and he considered that a resort to physical force was a very bad precedent indeed. As it was, the Opposition were withstanding, as well and as bravely as they could, the almost overwhelming forces that were being brought against them. It would not be well to enter into a discussion on the railway policy of the Government on the motion before the House, and he would therefore reserve what he had to say till a later period of the night, when they had got into Committee. It would, no doubt, be useless to ask Government to reconsider the position in which the House was placed—that would be out of the question, as Government evidently intended to force them into Committee of Supply.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that the question before the House being that Orders of the

Day, Government Business, be now read, he wished the Speaker's ruling as to whether the motion was regular. He was aware that there were three ways provided by the Standing Orders for superceding business—either by a motion for adjournment of the House, or the previous question, or that the Orders of the Day be read; but in the latter case no particular Orders of the Day could be referred to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the motion had been moved in accordance with the usual practice, and that the notices were generally postponed until after consideration of the Orders of the Day, Government Business, "No. 1."

The SPEAKER was not aware that they had had a question precisely similar to this one before, but it would be better to put the question in its proper form and make a further motion afterwards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that it was too late to correct the method of procedure. The Speaker had put the Premier's motion as a substantive motion, not as an amendment, on the previous question before the House.

The SPEAKER said that the suggestion of the Colonial Secretary was hardly in accordance with Standing Order No. 48. If there were any inaccuracy in the method of putting the question it was not too late to correct it. It was a question of form only, the 48th Standing Order giving the form as "that the Orders of the Day be now read."

Mr. GRIFFITH understood that the reason given by Government for taking the private day was that they had not made any progress with Government business yesterday; and that was the only reason. The proceedings of Government just now were very extraordinary. It was the first time in the history of the colony that Government had endeavoured on two consecutive days to force on a reluctant minority the consideration of subjects they were determined not to consider. He did not remember any instance in which a majority, however large, was able to coerce a minority in this manner. He did not believe in tactics of obstruction, because they were inconsistent with the principles of parliamentary government, and equally inconsistent were tactics of coercion. The debate on the no-confidence motion was, as he had said before, owing to the action of the Government, an unfinished debate, and hon. members who were deprived of an opportunity of speaking on that occasion were not to be blamed for having exercised their undoubted right, on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, to express their opinions on so important a matter. The Government had made that an excuse to attempt to compel the House to consider after midnight one of the most important matters that had ever come before it. It

was not consistent with the due deliberation of matters of that kind to begin them after midnight, and last night hon. members were physically unfit to do so, owing to their having been kept up till a late hour on the previous night. It must be remembered that in passing that vote they were not only authorising the expenditure of a million and a-quarter on the extension of three trunk lines of railway, but were pledging the colony to a far larger expenditure before the distance mentioned in the Estimates was covered. If those lines turned out unproductive they would be a burden to the colony for many years, and their construction required the most careful and anxious consideration. A large section of the community was entirely opposed to these extensions; others thought they might safely be made with proper precautions; and others that they might be made without any precautions at all. The importance of the question was admitted on all hands, and the consideration of it should be approached calmly and deliberately. The House was certainly not in a fit condition now to discuss so important a matter. Even amongst the Government supporters, with their majority of three, were some who gave this particular part of their policy only a half-hearted approval, and on this side several hon. members were absent, so that any division taken to-night would be no fair test as to the number of the members who approved or disapproved of these particular proposals of the Government. Under such circumstances they, as a deliberative assembly, were bound to wait until the matter could be fairly and dispassionately considered. He was quite aware the Government thought they had been waiting long enough, but many reasons could be given for the delay that had taken place; and he could say sincerely, and was prepared to vindicate his statement if necessary, that this side could not fairly be charged with having obstructed business. They were as anxious as the other side to despatch the Government business. Time had been wasted from quite other causes; and even supposing one or two days had been wasted, that was no reason for the adoption of such extraordinary tactics as those now proposed. If the question came forward on Monday he intended to discuss it in the manner it deserved, and should then ask for certain information which he hoped would be given. There was no levity in the matter, as far as this side of the House was concerned. The question now was, whether they should occupy their time between now and one o'clock to-morrow talking against time and doing nothing—a course of action not conducive to the credit of the House or the welfare of the colony—or whether the Government would accept what was not a defeat to them. It was not desirable that a strong Government should be defeated on matters of detail,

and the whole question resolved itself into one of convenience. It was perfectly idle to force a question of this kind under present circumstances, and he could see no sufficient justification for the Premier's motion. It would be far better to go on with private business, and give hon. members, and the Premier as well, a little more time for reflection. He was quite aware of the determined character of the Premier, and that when he said a thing he would do it. But there were hon. members on this side who had said it too, and it would be simply a question of determination against determination. The Government would sustain no humiliation in giving way to the inevitable.

Mr. WALSH rose to speak to the question, but was ruled out of order by the SPEAKER on the ground that he had already addressed the House upon it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was sorry to differ from the Speaker. The question put early in the afternoon was, that "Order of the Day, Government Business, No. 1, be now read," and the question now was, that "the Orders of the Day, General Business, be now read." Surely that was a distinct question.

The SPEAKER said the alteration had been made simply in order to bring the matter within the scope of the 48th Standing Order. The question was the same.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if the first question were passed the House would go into Committee of Supply; but if the second one were put and passed the House would go on with the Private Business, Orders of the Day. The results in the two cases would be very different, and he was of opinion the questions were very different, and everyone who had spoken to the former could speak again.

The SPEAKER said it appeared to him that objection had been taken to two separate motions being put together. The alteration was made to bring the question within the scope of the 48th Standing Order, and to remove irregularities. In his opinion the question was the same, although the words had been altered.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said he thought, at first, the leader of the Opposition was going to disclaim the tactics of the Opposition yesterday evening; but instead of doing so he seemed rather to justify the course they had taken, and said in a plaintive tone that his party were too fatigued to go on with business at that hour of the night. Whatever might be the usual practice elsewhere, he (Mr. Perkins) did not believe the business of Government had ever been delayed before with such small reason. Upon every trivial question each member felt it to be his duty to speak—first, on the main question, and a second time if there should be a motion for adjourn-

ment. If the leader of the Opposition had been sincere in his professed desire to transact the business of the country, he might yesterday evening have disowned the tactics of his followers and left them to shift for themselves; but instead of doing so he went away and took a comfortable night in bed. Did the hon. gentleman expect that hon. members coming from other parts of this extensive country could afford to spend seven or eight months in Brisbane night after night witnessing such scenes as those of last night? The hon. gentleman should bear in mind that he took up a fortnight over that dreary want-of-confidence debate. That question was talked round about and in every way, and every possible fresh matter was imported into it, yet it could not be said that the Government showed any inclination to cut it short. When the debate was adjourned last Wednesday week, there was a general understanding that it would be closed on the following Tuesday; but, because a few hon. members either did not feel inclined to speak, or had not made up their minds what to say, hon. members on the Government side were to be punished with another night's debate, and because that was refused the whole ground was travelled over again. He would ask the hon. gentleman and his followers to be resigned to their fate. They might as well take the matter in good part, and it was well understood what was meant. He had not been communicative on the subject; but any child in the street, in inland towns particularly, and especially in a town which he visited occasionally, could tell what was going to be done. The tactics and intentions of the hon. gentleman were very well known two months ago, and now he came and in a plausible way invited the House to believe that on Monday next he and his party would be prepared to go on with business. He hoped the hon. gentleman was sincere and telling the truth, as it was quite time that something was done. It was only a burlesque on legislation to ask sensible men to witness the scenes that took place last night and this morning. He objected to that sort of thing; but, if the work was to be done, he could endure fatigue both mental and physical as well as any other hon. member. During the session too many concessions had been made, and it was found that for every concession there were two or three fresh encroachments, so that he had come to the conclusion that that was not the way to carry on business. If hon. members set to business, the Premier had intimated that the session might be closed in about a month; and hon. members might just as well address themselves to business, and not indulge in dreary ramblings that the House were sick and tired of hearing. The principal excuse put for-

ward for not going on with business was the absence of plans, books of reference, and specifications for the various lines; but surely any tyro in business matters would see the hollowness of it. If the plans for those works were produced the House might disapprove of them, a fresh survey might have to be made, and the money would be wasted. The House had the right to affirm the desirableness of certain lines and to vote money for their construction; but not one yard could be constructed until the House had determined upon the route. It was all nonsense to attempt to delude new members with the idea that they were being deceived or misled. The leader of the Opposition had a fair trial; he chose his own time and weapons, and was beaten; now let him accept his defeat, and proceed earnestly to business.

MR. KINGSFORD said the Minister for Lands seemed to look upon members of the Opposition as paupers when he talked about concessions, and said they had no right to speak as they thought proper. It appeared that they were to talk just as they were permitted to talk, and say what they were permitted to say. He could tell the hon. members that they were quite as independent as hon. members on the Government side, and would neither be restricted nor told what they were to say. It had been persistently and constantly said that they were trespassing and poaching upon some ground on which they had no business; but they were there as members, and he should maintain his right and use it whenever he thought proper, the Minister for Lands notwithstanding. Their object was not to obstruct, but if they differed from the Ministry they had a right to fairly and honourably oppose them. If by misfortune the Opposition and the Government should come into collision he could not help it; but they would not sit and eat humble pie and talk as they were told. The Ministry, in their opinion, were wrong, had put forward a wrong policy, and did not understand their work; and the Opposition had a perfect right, which they would exercise, to check them as far as they could and assist them in getting into the right path.

Question—That the Orders of the Day be now read—put.

The House divided:—

AYES, 23.

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

NOS, 15.

MESSRS. Griffith, Dickson, Douglas, Miles, Rea, Bailey, Beattie, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Horwitz, Tyrel, Groom, Kates, Kingsford, Garrick, and Grimes.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

On the Order of the Day being called,

MR. GRIFFITH moved that the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Bankers' Books Evidence Bill.

The PREMIER moved, as an amendment, that this and the following five Orders of the Day be postponed until after the consideration of Government business. He had the opportunity, now, of replying to some remarks made by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. gentleman had spoken in what, no doubt, he considered a conciliatory speech, and one which would tend towards bringing the House to business; but the conciliation only lay in the tone of the speech. There was no concession offered; on the contrary, he actually asked the Government to recede from the position that they took up at that hour last night, acknowledge that they had done wrong, let the House go, and commence afresh on Monday. If the hon. gentlemen had the slightest notion of making a concession he would have given some reason for the course pursued by the Opposition during the last twenty-four hours, and communicated what the intentions of the Opposition were when the House met again. If he had pledged his word as leader of the Opposition that he would do everything to see the Government business forwarded, he (Mr. McIlwraith) should have looked upon it as some concession; it was the least that he expected, and the least he would accept; but the hon. gentleman said not one word to that effect. Let hon. members look at the position of things. He (Mr. McIlwraith) moved about 4 o'clock yester-afternoon that the Speaker should leave the chair with the object of going into Supply. Then commenced a long rambling discussion on nearly every conceivable subject, and it lasted until 11 o'clock, when the House got into Supply. Did the business he brought on come unexpectedly upon the Opposition? On the night before the hon. gentleman asked plainly what business would come before the House the next day, and the reply was the Loan Estimates. The Government met the House on Wednesday to discuss those Estimates; but, owing to the action of the hon. gentleman and his party, the whole evening was spent without getting into Supply, and the Opposition commenced to obstruct about 11 o'clock, when the first motion was made. The hon. gentleman shortly after that went, but left not the slightest doubt upon the minds of hon. members as to what the intentions of the Opposition were—in fact, the hon. gentleman himself said plainly that he meant to obstruct any business being taken that night. He (Mr. McIlwraith)

was determined that business should be done, or that he should discover some very good reason why it should be postponed. The obstruction went on, and hon. members opposite talked until the House resumed that afternoon for a fresh day's work. They spoke very little to the business before the Committee, except the hon. member for Enoggera, who asked for certain information on the vote placed before the Committee. The greater part of it had been given, but he (Mr. McIlwraith) was prepared to repeat it and to give the remainder, had the hon. member not, by his long speech, prevented him having the opportunity to do so. The hon. member spoke for two hours, and it was patent his object was not so much to elicit information as to make a speech to pass the time away. The Government had been willing to give the Opposition all the information that they desired, and all the information that had been asked had been given at that sitting by the Minister for Works. If the Opposition wished to make an amendment on the Ministerial proposals, they had failed to indicate it in any of the speeches that they had delivered. Surely the Opposition must have some definite plan on the vote that had been proposed. If they meant to attack the whole of the main trunk line items, let them indicate it; it was quite possible that in their reasons the Government might see some cause for adjourning; but they would not admit, as had been virtually asked by the leader of the Opposition, that they had been wrong. In order to carry on business the Government had taken the only course open to them, and until they saw some definite plan on the part of the Opposition to forward the business they were determined to attempt to make some progress with the Estimates. The hon. gentleman had said there was no precedent in the history of this Parliament for their action for the last four days. When he was Attorney-General his colleague, the member for Enoggera, who was Treasurer at the time, moved at 3 o'clock in the morning that a vote of £720,000 should be granted, being the instalment on certain railways, the first three being the lines for the extension of which a vote was now asked. The Opposition had claimed that they conceded something on that occasion, but they conceded nothing; they went on until 3 o'clock, when the business lapsed; they went no further, but the Government were determined to go further until they saw what mode of business the Opposition proposed in the place of what the Government proposed. A great many hon. members opposite had talked as if this was a perfectly new vote—as if they had no responsibility in it; it was simply for the extension of three railways proposed by themselves, and the extension of which

he (Mr. McIlwraith) had no doubt they themselves thought perfectly inevitable. He had two or three sound reasons to justify the bringing on of the vote last night, each of which was in itself sufficient. In the first place, three nights had been spent discussing the no-confidence vote, and it was only reasonable, after the Government had given due notice of what they intended doing on the fourth night, that some progress should be made. During all the discussion no argument had been given against the item itself; the objection had simply been that it should not be brought forward at the hour that it was—which was not a sufficient ground. The next reason was that hon. members knew perfectly well that it took considerable time to do the mechanical work connected with the printing and forwarding of debentures, and to get the Loan Bill passed. He could not see how it was possible to get the debentures ready in two months or ten weeks after the vote had passed; reckoning that, and the time it took to send debentures home, the Government would be hard enough pushed to get the money back in time to carry on the railways. It was this which induced him to bring on the Loan Estimates at this time. It would have been a great deal easier for him to have passed them at a later part of the session, especially after the admission of hon. members opposite that a loan was necessary; but he purposely inverted the order of business in order that the proceeds of the loan might be received in time for the public works, and the Opposition were guilty of unpatriotic and obstructive conduct in the line of action that they had pursued. What was the third reason why he insisted that they should proceed with business? The reason had been referred to by the leader of the Opposition, who expressed his opinion that if this vote for £1,170,000 were submitted to a full House it would not be carried. Well, he (the Premier) would be perfectly satisfied to take the decision of the House, and if he were defeated it would be a defeat of the Ministry, and he would be perfectly content with the result. In what position were they last night to do this? He would guarantee that during the remainder of the session there would not be a single night when there would be more members present than when he moved the vote of £1,170,000. It would be quite impossible to get a full House present during the remainder of the session. They had all the elements together last night for the purpose of getting a sound conclusion on the subject, and still the hon. gentleman shirked the verdict of the House. He would say little as to the position in which the hon. gentleman left the House last night. He had the greatest sympathy for the hon. gentleman, because he knew that he had a hard day's

work before him that fully justified his leaving the Chamber at an early hour last night; but he should remember that there were other hon. members who had work to do as well as himself—who had their bread to make every day, and although the hon. gentleman found it necessary to leave the Chamber last night, that was no justification for him leaving his party with the determination to obstruct business. But his position was a great deal worse if they looked at the constituent elements of the House. They had got together members from the utmost limits of the colony to vote on the present occasion, and the hon. member must acknowledge that it was a good thing to get a full expression of opinion from the constituents on the question. That the Government had endeavoured to do, and did the hon. member consider that he made a sacrifice in devoting one day to this business, when they considered the weeks and months some hon. members sacrificed in order to be present in the House? He sympathised with the hon. member in the position in which he was placed, but he certainly thought he (Mr. Griffith) should have some sympathy for members who came a long distance to perform their duties for their constituencies. Again, he had to repeat that in the apparently conciliatory speech of the hon. gentleman the conciliation was entirely in the tone of his address. In substance there was no conciliation whatever—not the slightest form of concession; and if he were to concede what the hon. gentleman asked, he should simply acknowledge that the action of the Government for the last four-and-twenty hours had been entirely wrong, while, on the contrary, he held that they took up the right position last night, and unless good reasons were given to show that they should recede from that position he had no intention of departing from it.

MR. GRIFFITH (a portion of whose remarks were indistinctly heard in the gallery) was understood to say that the hon. the Premier had given no justification whatever for attempting to force the House into the consideration of the most important business of the session at midnight. There was a great deal of information that should be supplied to the House with regard to these railways. One thing they wanted to know was, in what direction they were going. They were told that there were plans ready as far as the Mitchell, but they did not know whether the Government proposed to make the Western railway in that direction or not. If they gave even that information it would be something. They were also entitled to know what was the nature of the country, what the line was likely to cost, and what were the reasons for making the extension. With respect to the Northern line they had not even

commenced to make the survey, and there was much important information in connection with those lines that must be elicited, and which the Government were bound to give before they asked the House to consent to this loan. All they had succeeded in doing since yesterday afternoon was to waste time. They were now in exactly the same position they were then; and this motion to postpone private business in order to proceed with Government business was entirely unprecedented, and in violation of the rules of fair-play always recognised in Parliament. They might say that an extreme case justified extreme measures, but he did not think the circumstances of the case justified such a course of proceeding. He could fancy he heard the speeches of hon. members on the Government side of the House, if such a proposition had been made when they were in Opposition—denouncing any such attempt as taking from private members, against their will, the conduct of private business. The Premier had stated that there were members from different parts of the colony in the House, and he should be sorry to keep them there longer than was absolutely necessary; but he would ask was the Treasurer facilitating their getting away by the course he was adopting? He said he was not, and that they would not get away a single hour earlier if they wasted the whole of to-night as they did last night. If the Treasurer could gain even a barren triumph by forcing on this question he could understand his doing so; but he would not gain even that, and it was simply wasting time. He was sorry to see the gentleman in charge of the Government of this great country insisting upon wasting time and injuring the health of hon. members, simply because the Government would not give in—because he had put his foot down and said there he would stop. There was a great principle at stake on the Opposition side of the House because the Treasurer said he would compel the minority to submit to the proposals of the Government without future discussion for no other reason than that on a particular division he had a majority of three—a majority which he (Mr. Griffith) maintained in a full House would be reduced to one at most;—in fact, the hon. gentleman invited the Opposition to concede this, that several of their number having gone away, they should take a division when he was sure of a large majority. Although the hon. gentleman said he was prepared to take a fair division, he tried to force them into a division, when all their members were not present. Those were not fair tactics, apart altogether from being unprecedented and in violation of the orders of the House that private business should take precedence on Thursday.

HON. MEMBERS on the Government benches: There is no such order.

MR. GRIFFITH said there was no such order, it was true, in those words, and the assertion of the hon. members was simply miserable quibbling again. They knew that all hon. members of the House had equal privileges, and that the Orders of the Day took precedence according to their order on the paper, but it was ordered that on certain days Government business should take precedence; so that, practically, there was an Order of the Day that on Thursday private business should take precedence. He repeated that under those circumstances the Treasurer was seeking to take a most unfair advantage, knowing that several hon. members of the Opposition were absent, and therefore any division now taken on the merits of the question would not be a fair test. Last week, when the Opposition had a majority in the House, they did not attempt to force the Government to a division because they considered it would be simply disgraceful. If he had attempted to do anything of the kind he should have forever disgraced himself as leader of a party; and he said that the present circumstances were exactly analogous. The hon. the Premier was now seeking because he had a majority—he (Mr. Griffith) did not say he would not have a majority—but because he was now certain of a large majority he invited the Opposition to “walk into his parlour,” as the spider said to the fly. The desire of hon. members on that side of the House was to find out what the real opinion of the House was on this matter, and it was absurd to talk about it not being likely that they would have a fuller House than they had last night. He hoped that they should have a sufficient number of members present that this proposal would not be carried by anything less than an absolute majority of the House, especially as a large section of the community did not agree with it. They were told upon good authority that, if an appeal were made to the constituencies, the present majority in the House would not be able to carry on at all. He did not know whether that was so or not; all they knew was, that a majority of the new Parliament were in favour of the present Government. He did not wish at that early hour of the evening to say anything about being conciliatory—he now simply said what was common-sense. The Government appeared to have made up their minds—they had put their foot down, and it seemed to be their obstinate determination to carry out what at the most would be a most barren victory. He would not take any notice of what the hon. gentleman had said about his (Mr. Griffith's) going away last night, as that was a matter between himself and mem-

bers on his side of the House. He had duties to perform, and when he undertook them he was bound in all honour to perform them. When he undertook duties in that House he performed them, and the same with regard to other duties elsewhere; and when he ceased to be able to do that, he would refuse to undertake them. The conduct of the Government was entirely unprecedented—that, when hon. members came to discuss private business, an attempt should be made by the Government to force them to go on with the consideration of Government business.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there was no analogy whatever between the case stated by the hon. member, as to his not trying to steal a division last Thursday night and the question being put to the vote last evening. The hon. member entirely forgot that since Thursday last there had been a division of the whole House, which was then clearly in favour of the Government. The Opposition were then beaten by three votes, without the Government bringing down their reserve forces; and the hon. member should be satisfied with that, as there was not likely to be a fuller House during the present session. That division was on the whole policy of the Government, and the Loan Estimates were as much before the House on that occasion, and members voted as much for them as on the motion of the hon. gentleman opposite. He would ask how the present Government, when in Opposition, had acted last year when the present Premier brought forward what was termed a vote of want of confidence in the then Ministry by proposing a £3,000,000 loan? The Government on that occasion had only a majority of one; but the Opposition, instead of pursuing the tactics of hon. members opposite, a few minutes afterwards passed a Loan Bill for £100,000, and did not offer any further obstruction. It was a very good thing, indeed, to know when one was beaten, and to give in to a majority of the whole House; and that was the duty, not only of a Government, but of an Opposition also. With regard to the latter part of the hon. member's speech, in which he said that the Government had nothing whatever to do with his (Mr. Griffith's) business last night, he must differ from the hon. gentleman, as the hon. gentleman was not only the member for North Brisbane, but leader of the Opposition. He might have shirked his duties as a private member, but he ought not to have shirked his duties as leader of a party, as he had done. Instead of leading his party, he left it in the greatest state of disorder he (Mr. Palmer) had ever known a party to be left in. The condition of the party was graphically described by the hon. member for Bowen as consisting of four sections—namely, the followers of the member for North Brisbane, the

followers of the member for Maryborough, the obstructionists, and the tipsy contingent. That was what the hon. gentleman left last night—and a pretty medley, too, it was, and a very nice night hon. members had of it. He contended that it was the duty of the hon. member to have remained at his post and to have endeavoured to keep his followers in order. If the hon. member did not keep to his post he would warn him that the hon. gentleman sitting on his right (Mr. Douglas), if he could do so by any means in his power, would get back to his old post, and he would not leave the party to cope with the Ministry without a leader. At the same time, he (Mr. Palmer) did not think the hon. member for Maryborough would be the best man, as he had always considered the member for North Brisbane the best leader. But if the hon. gentleman left his post as he did on the previous evening, there was no good having him as a leader. The hon. gentleman, in his speech just now, had given no argument against the Government going on with the Loan Estimates that evening; he had merely used an argument that would have been equally as good last Tuesday or Wednesday as that evening—in fact, he used no argument, but said in the most distinct manner that he refused to go on with the railway question at all that night. What right, then, had the hon. gentleman to find fault with the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, and to accuse him of obstinacy? A great deal had been said about the Opposition not having stopped the business of the session, whereas they had done but little else. There had been two votes of want of confidence brought against the Government? The first was brought in in a very irregular manner by the hon. member for Maryborough, and, although the leader of the Opposition disclaimed having taken any part in it at first, he took very good care to have all his forces to vote for it. Then they had the motion of the leader of the Opposition, of which notice was given in such a manner as to threaten the annihilation of the Government. But that ended, after three days' talking, in a victory for the Government, and yet they had the whole thing not debated, but dribbled over again last night. They had been treated to the rambling rhapsodies of one hon. member for two hours, although that member had actually spoken on the previous evening; and to long speeches from other members; and he (Mr. Palmer) would like to know what there was in the whole lot to add to the arguments they had already heard? There was not one solitary new idea given by any one speaker. Hon. members opposite had also accused the Government with not getting on with their business; but the reason of that was well known, as the Opposition had not only by inference ob-

structed the Government, but some hon. members had actually openly avowed their intention of obstructing, and had done so. Did hon. members, in the face of that, suppose that the Premier was going to carry on private business when he was not allowed to carry on public business? He might just as well tell hon. members opposite that as the Government had commenced so they intended to go on. They were determined, if necessary, and even at the sacrifice of health, to sit up night after night, and thus show the country that whether on private business days or other days they were determined to go on and do the public business, and not allow private business to go on unless the public business went on in an equal proportion. Hon. members might just as well understand that at once. It was plain language, for it was of no use humbugging the country. He believed the Government had the country with them, notwithstanding what had been said by hon. members opposite. Some most magnanimous proposals had been made to the Government by the opposite side—that a Ministry with a large majority at their back should go to the country to test public opinion. Why, if they did such a thing, hon. members opposite would be the first to treat them as a set of fools. They wanted the Government to go to the country, and for what reason—simply because they might have a chance of slipping on to the Treasury benches. They were told that if they went to the country they would not be returned again; but they had been to the country, and, with one exception, they had been returned by the voice of the country: he had yet to learn that that voice had deserted them in any possible way. On the contrary, they might judge from the respectable portion of the Press that, so far from having lost the confidence of the country, they enjoyed it to a still greater extent than before. It was absurd to suppose that with the leading trumps in their hands they would throw down the cards, yet that was what the Opposition wanted them to do. Even supposing the Governor gave them a dissolution—which he was not very likely to do when they had a majority—and they went to the country, hon. members opposite would be the first to say "what fools those fellows are." But they would not do so, but would endeavour to carry on the business of the country.

Mr. REA said the hon. gentleman had quoted some remarks of the hon. member for Bowen to show that the Opposition was divided into four sections, and then by implication said that the party on the Government side of the House was a compact party. But what was really the composition of that party? There was first the Nebuchadnezzar party; next to that the Denominational dupes of 1880—the party

the Government would sell after having used them; and after that came the Glasgow Bank party. These were the members governing the country, and they need not talk of a tipsy contingent. They had got their official tipsy contingent also on that side of the House, but on his (Mr. Rea's) side it was composed of new members, while on the other side it was composed of the old seasoned hands—Her Majesty's Ministers;—that was the parallel between the two sides of the House. Were they to be told by the Treasurer that they were wasting the time of the country? What did the other side do last night but make greater jackasses of themselves than ever they did before? These were the patterns of public patriots; but when the Premier cast a slur on the leader of the Opposition because he had to go away, and said that he ought to have stayed in the House, what right had he to do so? The leader of the Opposition was a fitter man than the Ministers of the day. The Ministers could spend their time in the smoking-room, and next day come and get a chief clerk to do all their work; but the leader of the Opposition had to do his own work; and because he and other hon. members did so, these Botany Bay patriots got up and villified the nationalities of better men than themselves. If all the legal members on the other side of the House were pounded together in a mortar they would not be good enough to face the leader of the Opposition in any court. The Premier, in his remarks about surveys, asked what was the use of bringing down surveys, because they might not be agreed to, and the work would then have to be done over again. That was an argument why they ought to have plans and specifications laid before them. The Minister for Works had pointed to New South Wales as having voted money for railway extension without the plans being before them; but the distinction in that case was that the New South Wales Parliament was not a Parliament in which the Ministerial party consisted of twenty squatters out of twenty-four members. They could trust the New South Wales Parliament, but no other colony but Queensland would submit to the degradation now staring them in the face. Why did the Premier want the money out here before the works were begun? The people knew of the operations of the bank gamblers, and they knew that their money would all pass into the hands of the limited liability bank to be let out again. The Minister for Lands let that secret out, and that was why he (Mr. Rea) would not disgrace himself by voting this money without some guarantee of what uses it would be put to. The Premier also compared the demands of the present with that of the late Ministry, saying that they also had another railway policy—

HON. MEMBERS of the Ministerial side: Hear, hear;—sing, dance!

HON. MEMBERS of the Opposition: Chair, chair;—order!

The SPEAKER: I must point out that it has been held that cries of "Hear, hear," have been ruled to be disorderly, and that an hon. member addressing the House ought not to be so interrupted by them.

Mr. REA said the Colonial Secretary had claimed that the voice of the country—

Mr. MOREHEAD rose to a point of order. He did not intend in any improper way to take objection to the Speaker's ruling; but in the House of Commons the expression "Hear, hear" was very common; and when an hon. member made use of expressions objectionable to any member of the House, he was either cheered down or roared down or shouted down. He regretted the ruling the Speaker had given, but did not intend to do more than protest against it. He took it the ruling was not one that would be established by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The SPEAKER: These decisions have been given by the Speaker of the House of Commons in cases when such expressions are made in a disorderly manner for the purpose of interrupting the member speaking.

Mr. MOREHEAD wished to know at what period an interruption of that kind might be considered out of order, because he could not understand how the Speaker of the House of Commons could be a sort of barometer or thermometer to determine the point at which the cheers ceased to be cheers as generally accepted to become interruptions. Were they to be gagged and not allowed free expression to their feelings and be tied up?

The SPEAKER: The Standing Orders and the practice of Parliament do not recognise any right to put down a speaker, but the good sense of hon. members ought to be their own guide that they should not make use of such expressions as would interrupt the debate or interrupt the member addressing the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD referred the Speaker to "May," where it was stated in reference to the Standing Order, that—

"This rule is too often disregarded. In the House of Commons the most disorderly noises are sometimes made, which from the fulness of the House, and the general uproar maintained when 500 or 600 members are impatiently waiting for a division, it is scarcely possible to express. On the 19th March, 1872, whilst strangers were excluded, notice was taken of the crowing of cocks and other disorderly noises proceeding from members, principally behind the chair; and the Speaker condemned them as gross violations of the orders of the House; and could not refrain from expressing the pain with which he had heard them."

They could also exclude the strangers here, and he drew attention to the fact that there were strangers in the gallery.

HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

MR. MOREHEAD withdrew his remarks in reference to the presence of strangers in the gallery.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member should read the paragraph following the one he read. It is as follows:—

“Without any such noises, however, there are words of interruption which, if used in moderation, are not unparliamentary; but when frequent and loud, cause serious disorder. The cry of ‘Question’ has already been noticed, and its improper use condemned. Another is that of ‘Hear, hear,’ which has been sanctioned by long parliamentary usage in both Houses. It is generally intended to denote approbation of the sentiments expressed, and in that form is a flattering encouragement to a member who is speaking: it is not uttered till the end of a sentence, and offers no interruption to the speech. But the same words may be used for very different purposes, and pronounced with various intonations. Instead of implying approbation, they may distinctly express dissent, derision, or contempt; and if exclaimed with a loud voice and before the completion of a sentence, no mode of interruption can be more distracting or offensive to the member who is speaking. Whenever exclamations of this kind are obviously intended to interrupt a speech, the Speaker calls to ‘Order,’ and if persisted in would be obliged to name the disorderly members and leave them to be censured by the House.”

MR. REA, continuing, said that the Colonial Secretary had claimed that the voice of the country was with the Ministry. Was the voice of the country with the Ministry at the last Valley election?—and that was one of the latest evidences of public opinion. Then let that hon. member look at the election in the Logan when that seat was contested by Mr. Walsh. Was the decision in that case evidence of the voice of the country being with this Ministry? Look, also, at the occasion when the Postmaster-General put up for Rockhampton—was that another evidence of how the country trusted in the Ministry? Where had the hon. gentleman, then, found his majority? Why out in the wilderness where nothing but a squatter would have an opportunity of being elected—or if not a squatter a squatter's agent? That was evidence of what the majority was which kept the Ministry in power, and yet with that evidence before them the Colonial Secretary claimed that the Ministry held their seats by the voice of the country. Was there ever anything more monstrous? The hon. gentleman himself dared not face his own constituency; and yet he boasted that his party represented the opinion of the country. Would they be justified in voting three millions of money to men who had not the confidence of the country? He (Mr. Rea) had made a modest sugges-

tion that the Crown tenants should be asked to pay for the amount of benefit they received from these railways; and even that was scouted. And, now, there was a notice of motion on the notice paper, for the 2nd September, to give the squatters indefeasible leases. That was what those hon. members wanted who supported the present Government. Would anyone dare to bring forward such a motion in any of the neighbouring colonies or in New Zealand? The Crown tenants of this colony were more favoured than those in any of the other colonies. One-sixth of their runs nobody could touch but themselves, excepting in the railway reserves, where they must buy them up at once before anybody else came in; and that was the reason why they were going to get rid of the Railway Reserves Act. They had also railway, postal, and telegraph communication such as were unknown elsewhere, and yet they would not contribute anything to the Treasury in payment for the benefits they derived from such accommodation. With the evidence before them, hon. members would be selling their constituencies if they passed this vote. The Minister for Works had come in to-night with a flourish as to the information which was on its way and the plans that were in his office. Why was that information and those plans studiously kept out of sight for so long? This ought to have been produced months ago. Those considerations justified the proceedings of last night and the night before. The Premier had taunted them on this side with senseless talk; but, in reality, most of the senseless talk came from the Government benches, and he would appeal even to them if the ex-Treasurer, during his five hours' speech, deviated from the point under discussion by one iota? It was also an imputation against them that they had obstructed Government business; but could any one of them point to a single instance where three millions of money were asked for, and the parties who were to vote it were blindfolded as to what they were doing? If a single instance could be shown—and after many researches he had been unable to find one—he would gladly vote with the Government.

MR. ARCHER said he was not very greatly delighted with what was going on. It was the first time he had taken part in a discussion of this kind, or had been present when one side tried to prevent the other from carrying on business. Some of the reasons given for the obstruction were not strictly correct. Several hon. members had made a mistake as to the time when the discussion on the Loan Estimates began last night. He (Mr. Archer), after listening to the debate on the vote for £100,000 for immigration, left the House at twenty minutes to 11, along with some other hon. members, anxious to catch the Ipswich train; and at that time the

debate had been going on for twenty minutes; so that it was not 12 o'clock when the business was brought forward, but only twenty minutes past 10. One of the gentlemen with him, the hon. member for Northern Downs, told him he might expect to see the House still sitting at 10 o'clock next morning. It was evident, therefore, that before that hon. member left the House, it had been determined to obstruct business for the whole night. The reasons given by the different speakers for refusing to grant the vote reminded him of the reasons given by several gentlemen for taking a glass of grog. One took it because it was hot, another because it was cold, but none of them because they liked it. The hon. member for Maryborough objected *in toto* to the extension of the trunk lines; the leader of the Opposition was strongly in favour of them, but objected that they were not in possession of sufficient details; and the hon. member for Moreton had some theory of his own on the subject. Not one of them had given the true reason, and that was to deprive the Central district of the due extension of its line. He had carefully watched all that had been said on the subject, and his belief was that hon. members of the Opposition saw that their only chance to obstruct the prosecution of the Central Railway to the west was to stop the extension of the whole of the trunk lines. It would never do to say they would stop the Central Railway and turn the Southern and Western Railway up to the north, so they tried to stop the whole of the lines, and when the favourable moment came they would steal a march and attempt to carry the Southern and Western Railway where it had no right to go. It was not fair to use all the resources of the colony for the purpose of aggrandising the capital. No doubt a capital would always get its fair share of the trade of a country; but trade was not so much a matter of legislation as of position, and when England had to rely more upon duties for revenue than now, Liverpool, owing to its more favourable position for carrying the foreign trade of the country, was a far larger contributor to it than London. In the same way Rockhampton had certain advantages of position which Brisbane did not possess; but they knew from what had fallen from hon. members, from the Press, and in the Chamber of Commerce that it was looked upon as of the greatest importance that the Central line should be obstructed and the Southern and Western line carried north. That had a good deal to do with the obstruction to-night. He was aware that in Brisbane, as in other places, there were a great many men whose minds were too fair to look upon such a thing; but fairness was not always considered. There were others who considered it was perfectly

fair for the capital, with its commanding influence, to take advantage of that influence to deprive other places of their legitimate traffic. A great deal of the obstruction simply arose from a desire to shut up the three trunk lines for a time until a favourable moment could be hit upon to carry out the southern line to the place where some parties wanted it to go. The majority of hon. members were, he believed, too fair to listen to such a proposal. They recognised that it was not right to combat against nature, and that nature had given Rockhampton the advantage in that respect. Rockhampton was situated to the westward of Dalby, and was 180 to 200 miles nearer to the good lands of the west than Brisbane was, and, therefore, had a natural advantage. The merchants there had the enterprise and courage to open up trade with the west, and it was in justice due to the country and the district that the trade should continue to go to them. A good deal of the feeling manifested against the loan votes arose from a desire to set the matter asleep and then take a favourable opportunity to steal a march upon Rockhampton. It had been stated that the obstruction was caused by the Estimates having been brought on at 12 o'clock last night; but he denied that such was the case. He was going towards Ipswich at that time, and he knew that the fight was going to begin. If the matter had not been pre-arranged it might have seemed that the hour was too late to make such proposals. The fact was, however, that the Estimates were introduced at twenty minutes past 10, and the time was wasted over the immigration vote which nobody objected to, but which was made a foil to waste time, in order that it might be said that the proposals were brought forward after 12 o'clock at night. Everyone knew that hon. members on both sides would vote for the immigration item, but it was made use of to waste time. What would the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) have said had there been any objection to that vote, on the ground that, as in old times, there was not money enough for it? The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) made a very long speech, and several members asked different questions, but the time spent in discussing that item was only intended to throw back the introduction of the railway vote, and furnish grounds for the excuse that had been put forward. It was no use, however, speaking to the motion; everyone had made up his mind for another night, and nothing he could say would induce hon. members to change their minds on that subject. He had simply stated the fact that the action of the Opposition had been pre-determined in such a way that he (Mr. Archer) knew beforehand what the Committee was going to do;

and, having performed that duty, he would sit down.

Mr. DICKSON said he very much regretted the hon. member for Blackall had uttered the speech just delivered. He had always recognised in that hon. member a gentleman desirous of dealing with every subject presented for his consideration with extreme impartiality, and regarded him as the last member in the House who would have entered into a speech abounding with insinuations and imputed motives.

Mr. ARCHER said he had not insinuated anything; but simply stated a fact.

Mr. DICKSON said if the hon. gentleman disclaimed dealing in insinuations, he had certainly assumed wrong inferences. It would have been more judicious had the hon. member, in referring to what appeared to have been a private communication with the hon. member for Northern Downs, waited till the hon. member was present, so that the House might have heard his version of the affair. It was easy to understand that the hon. member (Mr. Thorn)—foreseeing that the obstinacy of the leader of the Government, which had led him to state that he would make no concession to the views of the Opposition would cause the Opposition to take up the attitude they did last night—might have made to the hon. member for Blackall, while sitting opposite to him in the railway carriage, the remarks which led him to suppose that the action of the Opposition had been pre-determined. Such a conversation on an occasion like that was no justification for the inferences the hon. member had drawn. He was convinced—though the statement was quite new to him—that if the hon. member were in his place his statement would be somewhat similar to that. It was clearly to be seen at a comparatively early period of the evening that the action of the Government would force upon the Opposition the position which they had taken up and still maintained. It was not to be inferred therefrom that they had premeditated a policy of obstruction against the Loan Estimates; but they contended, and still maintained, that a sufficient amount of information should be given before passing those votes. With regard to what the hon. member said as to the views of a large number of the community of Brisbane, he disclaimed those views, as being held by any considerable portion of the community, altogether. The people of Brisbane recognised the importance of Rockhampton and its decided claims to be considered the natural outlet for the Central district. He could confidently point to the actions of the late Administration, and ask that hon. member what Administration that ever held the reins of power had done as much for the Central district, and Rockhampton in particular, as the Administration

that commenced in 1874? To state that any large number of members opposed the Estimates because they desired to prevent the extension of the Central Railway was entirely inaccurate. The leader of the Opposition when in Rockhampton distinctly stated that all three lines were to be extended in such a manner as not to interfere with each other, or become rivals for the carrying trade. He had always persisted with the majority of hon. members on the necessity of providing for the extension of the Central line to an equal extent with the Southern, and that was a principle from which, during this debate, hon. members had not in any way receded. The contention of the Opposition had been entirely that proper means should be provided for carrying on both the lines. If he had shown warmth in defending the hon. member for Northern Downs and the community, a section of which he had the honour to represent, from most unfounded charges, he hoped the hon. member for Blackall would not feel offended. He had been rather surprised to hear such unguarded expressions of opinion from a gentleman who was always so apparently impartial and straightforward in all he undertook. Perhaps it was an indication of the state of chaos into which the whole of the members of the Assembly were said to have fallen last evening. Possibly the late sitting had affected the hon. member; his nerves were unstrung, and he might have indulged in unguarded expressions which in his cooler moments he would regret. He (Mr. Dickson) had risen chiefly to reiterate what he had previously said in explanation of a statement made by the Premier and the Colonial Secretary. The Premier, in justification of the attitude he now assumed, said he was precisely following the line of action taken by the ex-Treasurer on a similar occasion in 1877. After the clear explanation that he had already made he was surprised the Premier should still persist in his statement. There was no analogy in the cases, and he was constrained in self-defence to point out the principal differences. In 1877, the Loan Estimates were submitted on the 12th October. After a long debate, the first item—£150,000 for immigration—was brought on at 12 o'clock and was passed. Thereupon the Loan Estimate having been by the acceptance of that item initiated, the chairman was moved out of the chair. Four days afterwards the railway votes, which were the objectionable items on the Estimates, were introduced and gave rise to a long debate. The Minister for Works introduced the discussion on financial separation, which led to the consideration of the railway vote, at a late period of the evening, but there was a difference between their position now and then. The Loan Estimate of 1877

had, four days before the railways were debated, been received by the Committee, and there had been an interval of four clear days during which hon. members could satisfy themselves regarding the propriety of the lines of railway. Now, however, they had had a debate upon the general policy of the Government, and curtailed by the Government in a manner that he very much regretted, and, after a long discussion, at 12 o'clock at night, the immigration vote was proposed and acceded to. Upon that vote being passed, the Government ought to have moved the chairman out of the chair, and allowed an interval of two or three days for the consideration of the loan votes.

Attention called to the state of the House—quorum formed.

Mr. DICKSON said the Colonial Secretary had justified the action of the Government upon the position assumed by the late Administration in 1878, when a motion for a loan of three millions was proposed by the hon. member (Mr. Mellwraith). It was represented that on that occasion, after the vote of want of confidence had been disposed of, the Opposition magnanimously allowed the Government of the day to proceed with the consideration of the Loan Estimate, and that a vote was taken the same evening; but that statement, also, was not strictly correct, and, even if it were correct, the circumstances of the case did not apply. The discussion on the no-confidence vote extended over three days, and the House then consisted of forty-two members; and after members had been allowed to have their full say, no pressure having been exercised to close the debate, an Appropriation Bill of £100,000 was granted: no loan vote was taken, it being simply a formal matter. On the present occasion the House consisted of fifty-five members, and they had been told by the Government that they must be restricted to three days on the consideration of the want-of-confidence motion. Many hon. members had not spoken when the decision upon the motion was demanded by the Government, and it was the action of the Government in not allowing an extra day for the debate that made yesterday to be appropriated by hon. members who had not previously spoken. After they had expressed their views, the House went into Committee of Supply, and the Government obtained £100,000 for immigration. They ought to have rested there—they had made substantial progress, the necessity of the loan had been admitted, and had the Government then had the courtesy to accede to the reasonable demands of the Opposition to postpone the consideration of the Loan Estimates to a future day, hon. members would not have seen the unseemly spectacle of last night's debate, and what might possibly arise

before the House adjourned to-morrow. The Government had taken up a defiant position, and were deaf to all remonstrances. They said they had copied from New South Wales their new system—a prejudicial one he considered—of demanding a large amount of loan votes without the necessary plans and specifications. He wished they had introduced it in some other form than by attempting to localise the Victorian form of legislation—namely, the “iron-hand,” as had been clearly shown in the manner in which the loan proposals had been placed before the House. The Colonial Secretary had paraded his usual statement that the policy of the Government was completely before the House. Where had it been shown clearly and consistently during the session? He could not find it in any document or statement, it was not to be found in the speeches of Ministers or in the financial statements—possibly it was written between the lines. If the Government had placed an intelligent, clear and defined policy before the country, and had accompanied it with information such as the House had a right to demand, there would have been satisfactory progress made with the Loan Estimate. The Premier had accused the leader of the Opposition with leaving the Assembly last night, and allowing the discussion to degenerate into a state of chaos; but if the hon. gentleman would persist in his unreasonable demands, he (Mr. Dickson) feared during this evening that he would find “chaos had come again.” The Government were entirely to blame for their present position. When the vote was submitted last night he pointed out that a certain amount of information was essential, and he would repeat now that, dealing with such large railway proposals, they ought to have the Engineer-in-Chief at the bar of the House; hon. members ought to have submitted to them the best professional opinion in the colony concerning the manner of construction of these railways and all matters of detail which might suggest themselves to their minds. The action of the Government was placing hon. members in a false position. If the proposals were satisfactory to the country they would bear the test of thorough investigation; if they could not bear that test, and could not stand the criticism which the Opposition were entitled to give, their rejection would be in the true interests of the State, but the responsibility would rest upon the Government for having introduced their proposals at an inopportune time and in declining to give the House the information it was entitled to demand.

Mr. PATERSON thought that the direction of the debate that evening had been of an undefined character. He had noticed that

several members sitting on the Government side had insinuated that the tactics of the Opposition arose from their objection to the trunk-line policy. As one who acted with the Opposition generally on large and broad questions, he might be entitled to say on their behalf that that was not the reason at all upon which the tactics of last night were grounded; and at the same time he might take the opportunity of saying that personally he had nothing to do with those tactics, and that he refused distinctly, after the intimation of the Premier that he intended taking the votes for the trunk-line extensions that night, to speak one word in favour of the obstruction of business. He rose more particularly now to refer to the utterances of the hon. member for Blackall. That hon. member stated, and no doubt he had grounds for his statement, that the Brisbane people were in favour of carrying the Roma line to the country of which Rockhampton was the natural port, but he (Mr. Paterson) denied that the newspapers the hon. member had referred to were correct by representing the views of the mercantile men of Brisbane in that matter. It was not true that the majority of the commercial men of Brisbane were in favour of carrying the Roma Railway to the westward of the Rockhampton line. So satisfied was he of that that he had the fullest faith that the leading members of the Liberal party were of the same mind, and indeed of stronger mind to-day than they were years ago, in regard to that matter. In proof of that he might point to the fact that the Liberal party had instituted and carried out a public works policy in the Central district much more vigorously than any Administration that preceded them. As he stated the other night, the first mile of railway the Rockhampton people ever got was from the Liberal party, and likewise the last section was also from that party. Taking the mileage, ninety miles were authorised in the Central district, and by Liberal Governments, and the proportion of expenditure had been over £800,000 for railways by that party, and £480,000 by what might be termed squatting Governments. These facts coupled with the large sums of money that had been voted by the Liberal party—who had been termed southern or Queen-street men—for the bridges over the Fitzroy River and Alligator Creek, for improving the Fitzroy River, and the fact that they had established two lines of coaches from the railway to Blackall and Aramac, clearly indicated that the Brisbane people were not inimical to the interests of that district, or averse to reasonable progress being made with the trunk line there in that section of the colony. Yet they were told by the hon. member for Blackall that there was an organised party at the present

time who were endeavouring to defeat the prosecution of the Central line to gratify commercial jealousy said to exist here. In substantiation of what he stated as to the true feeling of the mercantile community in Brisbane, he believed there was, in the Works Department, a circular letter addressed to one of the Ministers and signed by all the mercantile men in Brisbane with very few exceptions, expressing their desire that the Government should prosecute the construction of the Central trunk line in order to keep the men employed on the branch between Emerald Downs and the Comet from being disbanded. That did not show that the Brisbane people were jealous of the entrance of the Central railway into the western interior; and he could say that nothing had led so much to the death of the old spirit of jealousy and ill-feeling between Brisbane and Rockhampton as the practical justice of what he might term the Liberal Administrations of the colony. But while the people of Rockhampton felt that they had nothing to fear from those whom they formerly considered their southern enemy, a new enemy had cropped up in the north, in the very southerly course of the line from Townsville to the western interior. He held that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, and that if it was expedient that three trunk lines should go into this great western territory, it was equally expedient that some general rule should control their progress to the west—namely, a due-west course as nearly as practicable subject to special engineering difficulties that might arise in endeavouring to pursue that course. That rule, he believed, would not apply to the line to Charters Towers, because it was necessary to touch that important gold-mining district; but, from Charters Towers the line should go due west, and, if there was to be any divergence from that course, it should rather be in a northerly direction, and thus avoid competition adverse to the Central railway. He quite concurred with hon. members that the past fortnight had been most profitless. Perhaps the discussion had been advantageous in some respects, but still there had been a great deal of chaff for very little grain; and if he, as an humble member of the House, might be allowed to make a suggestion in order to enable them to get to their homes to-night, and come next week in what might be called all-round good temper, to the consideration of these Loan Estimates, it would be something the same suggestion that he made the other evening. The great majority of members on both sides were in favour of a trunk-line policy, with necessary precautions against ultimate invasion upon the general revenue so far as the taxpayers of the colony were concerned; and he would suggest that the Treasurer,

on behalf, not merely of his own party, but of the country, should give an assurance that if on the completion of these trunk lines there was, after payment of working expenses, a deficiency of interest, the pastoral tenants should be asked to pay an additional rental which would produce two-thirds of that deficiency. He did not think that was unreasonable or asking too much. What would the pastoral tenants get in exchange? A squatter well known to many hon. members had informed him that on one occasion he sent his wool down to Brisbane, and it was six months on the road, and that when his supplies were being brought back, together with a number of immigrants, they were so long on the road that the immigrants consumed all the rations before they reached the station. Those were exaggerated circumstances which fortunately did not occur often; but it showed what squatters might be subjected to in the operation of their calling. Taking the every-day circumstances of their calling, surely it was an advantage to have certain and speedy carriage—not only for supplies to be brought from, but also for wool to be sent to the coast. There would also be the interest saved by such expeditious transit, to say nothing of what the Minister for Works had spoken of as the civilizing influence of railway communication. That hon. gentleman, the other night, when speaking of the grass of the colony having paid the interest on the money borrowed for railway purposes and leaving a balance of £280,000, said that he hoped to make the grass pay for the further interest they were about to incur. This was the position in which they stood. The original contract with these western squatters was to pay rent for grass *minus* railway privileges; now it should be payment for grass *plus* railway privileges. He (Mr. Paterson) had shown that one-third additional rental from the grass in the Mitchell district would cover two-thirds of any deficiency that could possibly occur in the estimates of the hon. Minister for Works, and he wanted this assurance from the Premier that he had at any rate no objection to endorse the hopes of his Cabinet—namely, in expecting increased revenue from these districts, by saying that should there be a deficiency in the returns from these railways he would call upon the pastoral lessees in the district to contribute a portion of such deficiency. He believed he had said sufficient to show that the old prejudice that might have existed between Rockhampton and Brisbane had so far decayed that it could not in these days be fanned into a flame again, and also sufficient to require some assurance that in the event of the railway earnings being against the general taxpayer the western graziers would be asked to contribute towards making up the deficiency.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he rose for the purpose of answering some remarks of the late Treasurer (Mr. Dickson) in regard to an analogy that existed between his mode of bringing forward the Loan Estimates in 1877 and that adopted by the present Government. In 1877 a Loan Estimate was brought forward on the 12th October, and after a long discussion a vote of £150,000 for immigration was passed at a late hour of the night. The House then adjourned and the matter was again brought up for discussion on the 16th October. When the chairman was moved out of the chair a discussion was raised by him (Mr. Macrossan) on the general question, which was kept up until midnight. Then the Colonial Treasurer proceeded with his Loan Estimates, and some time between midnight and three in the morning the hon. gentleman proposed a sum of £720,000 for a batch of railways. So far the hon. member's statement was correct; but what had been the case in regard to the present Loan Estimates? After three days' discussion on a vote of want of confidence—and he might mention that no objection had been made by the Government to prolong the discussion, so long as hon. members opposite were present to speak—when it was nearly 2 in the morning they came to a division, and the Opposition were defeated, the same as in 1877. The Premier then moved a sum of £100,000 for immigration, which should have been passed in the same way as the vote of the late Treasurer in 1877, but at the solicitation of hon. members opposite the chairman was moved out of the chair and the vote was left over until the next day. Next day, after a long discussion, the same as in 1877, the vote for immigration was introduced at half-past 10, and two hours afterwards it was passed, and then the vote for railways was proposed; so that in all respects, so far, there was an analogy between the two cases. But now he came to the difference between them. In 1877, when the present Government were sitting in Opposition, he (Mr. Macrossan) objected as strongly to the bunch of railways then proposed as the hon. member now did to these railways. The debate was then prolonged in committee until 3 o'clock on the next afternoon when the Speaker took the chair, and between 3 and half-past 6 o'clock the money was voted. To-day the Speaker had resumed the chair at 3 o'clock—but what had been done? The great difference was this, that the late Opposition on being beaten after doing what they considered their duty, succumbed, and let the vote pass; whereas, the present Opposition did not do that, but were determined to impose their policy on the Government. That was the contention of the leader of the Opposition, of the hon. member for Enoggera, and of other hon. members. They were quite willing that

the Government should concede everything, and that they should take the policy of the minority; but they were not willing to accept the policy of the Government. He put it to the hon. member for Enoggera whether that was the way in which parliamentary government should be conducted? The hon. member for Enoggera directed attention to what he termed the introduction of the "iron-hand" by the present Government, and accused them of introducing the Victorian system of politics; but that was what the hon. member himself was doing. The system of obstruction now pursued is borrowed from Victoria, and is the same kind that preceded and caused the adoption there of the cloture or "iron-hand." We have no intention of introducing the "iron-hand" or anything like it, but the Government business and the Loan Estimate must be considered, and we shall persist in carrying it on. The hon. member suggested that the Engineer-in-Chief should be called to the bar of the House to be examined in regard to these lines; but in 1877 the same proposition was not made, yet then they were all new lines that were proposed, whereas now they were only extensions. The Loan Estimate had been on the table now for three weeks, and yet the hon. gentleman said that more time was required to consider it—and no doubt, if it was on the table for three months the same thing would be said. As to the speech of the hon. member for Rockhampton, he would confine himself to noticing the proposition that hon. member made just before sitting down—namely, that the pastoral properties should be made to pay for any deficiency in the accounts of a railway passing through those properties. That was precisely what he (Mr. Macrossan) had proposed in 1877 to the very gentlemen that the hon. member was now supporting. He then had it put to the vote, and he was defeated. He would now tell the hon. member that, although he did not expect to be a member of the Government when these railways were finished, he, for one, would be quite willing to propose a property-tax on all properties through which railways passed, when these railways did not pay interest on the cost of construction; at the same time, he did not know why the western line should be singled out, as that was part of a line already constructed. Property was as much benefited by branch lines as trunk lines; for instance, in the case of the Maryborough and Gympie, and the Bundaberg and Mount Perry lines, should they be running at a loss to the country a property-tax ought to be imposed on the persons through whose property they ran.

Mr. PATERSON said the hon. member would excuse him for interrupting him, but the question before the Committee now

was only the vote for trunk lines, and his remarks were therefore directed to them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that if the hon. member was willing that all property benefited by railways should be taxed he was with him; he had expressed the same opinion before, and would repeat it, and believed his colleagues endorsed it.

Mr. WALSH said he felt some diffidence in speaking after the able speech delivered by the Minister for Works. A system of obstruction had been indulged in which certainly was worthy only of the persons who were carrying it on; and the most contemptible part of it was, that hon. gentlemen who were only lately members of a Ministry made use of certain members who were not *compos mentis* to carry on the discussion. If the business of the House was to be conducted in that way, he hoped he might not be a member of the House very long. An hon. member had said it would be wasting time and money to have an appeal to the country, but if an appeal to the country would have the effect of preventing the return to the House of a few wretched, miserable members—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must not make use of such expressions in reference to members of the House.

Mr. WALSH did not intend to use objectionable language, but he felt very warm on this subject, and he could not help saying that it would be a matter of congratulation all round if some hon. members of the other side of the House should, on an appeal to the country, find their way back to the House no more. Hitherto they had had the reputation of having a Parliament with a character in all respects superior to that of the neighbouring colonies. Referring to the speech of the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Paterson), who declared that there was now no jealousy existing between Rockhampton and Brisbane, he (Mr. Walsh) knew much better, and, as an instance, the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce the other day objected to the Financial Districts Bill because the people of Rockhampton and Townsville, now being in a position to import direct, would pay to the revenue direct, and the amount would be put to the credit of the district where it was raised. That showed there was jealousy, and that the Brisbane people wanted the Northern people to buy all their goods, duty paid, in Brisbane. If Brisbane was unable to supply the North now, how much more will it be the case when the opening up of the interior by these railways had taken place? A great deal had been said about the policy of the Government being objectionable, and the fact of the importance of the goldfields being for the first time recognised was one reason why the Loan Estimates were condemned as they have been by hon. members on the other side, excepting one or two. They desired to prevent the prosperity

of the North. Was not the Government policy the same now as nine months ago? They wanted to borrow three millions there and then, wanted it now, and on that policy he (Mr. Walsh) had been returned. Of the three millions there was but one objectionable feature—£52,000 for the Sandgate Railway—and that was shameful. As to the railway policy of the present as compared with that of the last Government, there was this difference—that the present Government did not ask the House to swallow half-a-dozen railways in a lump as the late Government had, fearing that they could not carry some of them unless in that way. But the present Government were willing to take every line on its merits, and for that reason they were condemned in unmeasured terms all over the colony. When the hon. member (Mr. Paterson) referred to the Charters Towers Railway he advocated its extension north-westerly; but if the railway were carried as it was intended at present it would be 500 miles apart from the Rockhampton extension and would not interfere with the traffic of the Central line at any time. The railways had been sufficiently dealt with by the Minister for Works who had proved what the cost would be, and no one had attempted to answer him. The conduct of the Opposition was only a pretext to protract the debate. They said they wanted information, but they did not—their object was just to weary out hon. members who came from a distance, and though they might gain a temporary advantage it was a short-sighted policy, for when they came into power, as they probably would some day, the very same tactics they had employed might be employed against themselves. They might have come into office with good grace, but their conduct would now meet the disapproval of every right-thinking man in the community.

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

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be so inserted—put and passed.

Question—That this and the following Orders of the Day be postponed until after the consideration of Government Business, Orders of the Day—put and passed.

SUPPLY—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into Committee of Supply.

Question—That one shilling be granted—put.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that as it had been said that the greater part of the session had been taken up by useless discussion, he should examine the allegation. He would refer to the "Votes and Proceedings" to see who had wasted the time of the

House, and he would say at once that the blame lay with the Government, who had shown themselves utterly incompetent to manage the business of the House. The hon. gentleman then went through each day's "Votes and Proceedings" *seriatim*, showing that whatever time had been wasted must be laid to the account of the Government, and not of the Opposition. During the whole session there had been only two or three days upon which a fair amount of business had not been done. When a Government endeavoured to go on with Supply before their Bills had received consideration, the discussions were always more or less protracted. If the Government had devoted three Mondays, say, to the consideration of their Bills with the real intention of getting on with them, they might have passed them through at the rate of two a-night. There had been no obstruction at all to the real business of the session. Whenever the Government had fairly addressed themselves to the business of legislation they had received the hearty assistance of the Opposition; but they had not received such assistance when they proposed to introduce objectionable principles as they had in the case of the Land Bill. The extracts he had read from "Votes and Proceedings" gave the history of the present session, and it was a history of incompetence and not of obstruction. The only cause of the present difficulty was that the Government had lost their tempers, and said they would keep the Committee until 1 o'clock to-morrow. They had failed to find any pretext, except bad temper, for the course of the debate this evening. Throughout the session, any delay that had arisen had been caused directly or indirectly by the Government, and not by the Opposition. On two or three occasions, though the time had not been wasted, the business had been delayed, but those circumstances were no excuse for the conduct of the Government on the present occasion. He hoped the House would really get seriously to business next week. If the Government would set themselves to the business of the country seriously, and not wear quite so much of that air which had given rise to the expression "a bull at a gate," they would get on more pleasantly and comfortably. The Opposition had assisted more in the conduct of the business of the Government than the Government themselves, and were entitled to better treatment than to be told that the only private day members had in the week should be taken from them. The Government would gain nothing, but might lose a good deal, by persisting in keeping hon. members sitting for forty-eight hours at a stretch. He did not call upon them to give way, and did not think they would show any weakness in adjourning. They all

knew the history of the session of 1872, and that for two months there was continual obstruction. The first time that obstructive tactics were used was in the session before, when the Premier was a prominent member of the Opposition, and opposed to his present colleague, the Colonial Secretary. He had endeavoured to prevent a rupture taking place between both sides such as might interfere with the business going on amicably for the rest of the session, and he was still willing to assist in carrying on the public business; but he must confess it was not encouraging when any attempt was made by him in that direction to find that it was regarded as further obstruction by the Government. The temptation to feel disgusted at the conduct of public affairs was very strong when members were treated by the Government as the Opposition had been. He should not again ask the Government to show the common-sense previous Governments had displayed.

Mr. KINGSFORD said the floor of the House was becoming the arena of buffoonery; and he would suggest that on the Supplementary Estimates a sum should be placed for caps and bells. The present method of conducting business was gaining a name for the Assembly which would stick to it for years. The House had hitherto had the reputation of being superior to any other Legislature in Australia. He should like to see that character retained.

Mr. BEOR was very glad that some hon. members opposite had awoke to a sense of what went on upon the Opposition benches. Hon. members on the Government side fully agreed with what the last speaker had said, but it was not for them to first express their opinion. They felt that a repudiation of sympathy with the disgraceful conduct which had been seen on the Opposition benches would better come from Opposition members, and he was glad that it had come at last, although tardily.

Mr. AMHURST said that about six weeks since the leader of the Opposition said he would do his best to put down such scenes as had occurred and had been a disgrace to the Assembly. The vote of want of confidence having been disposed of, was the hon. gentleman going to carry out his pledges?

Mr. TYREL said he did not rise to address the House with a view to killing time, but to point out his reason for voting against the sum now before the Committee. That reason was supplied by the business paper of the House, for he found that while they were asked to vote £390,000 for the extension of the Northern line from Charters Towers somewhere out west, there was a motion on the business paper by the Minister for Works which distinctly showed that the Government had not yet decided

where this Northern railway was to start from. Under these circumstances he did not see how they could possibly ask the House to vote this money at the present time. The line to Charters Towers could not be constructed under two or three years, and this money could not be made use of for that period; and yet they would have to pay interest on this £390,000, which with depreciation of debentures and other expenses would amount to about 5 per cent. That would amount to about £20,000 per annum, or £60,000 for three years; and on behalf of his constituents he could not consent to throwing away £60,000 in that way. That was one reason why he opposed this vote; but there might be others with which he would not detain the House at present.

Mr. MOREHEAD was astonished at the hardihood of the hon. member who had just sat down, for if ever there was a railway that ought never to have been constructed it was the line from Warwick to Stanthorpe. The hon. member inveighed against the Charters Towers line, which would open up and tap the richest pastoral, mining, and possibly, in the future, agricultural district in the colony; while the extension to Stanthorpe went practically nowhere. To say that it would be the connecting link between this colony and New South Wales was a farce, because New South Wales would never connect with this colony near that point; and, even if they did, the difference of gauge would be a serious obstacle. The hon. member was judiciously silent when the vote was taken for that line, which was the biggest swindle ever perpetrated in the colony. There was no trade whatever at Stanthorpe; tin was exhausted, and the place was worked out. If the hon. member knew anything about the country the Charters Towers line would tap, or that Townsville was likely to become a port second to none in Queensland, with a larger trade, possibly, than this much-petted and spoiled city of Brisbane, he would not have made the remarks he did.

Mr. TYREL explained that he did not object to the Northern extension, but to the money being borrowed for that extension two or three years before it could be carried out.

Mr. MOREHEAD contended that the Northern and Central railways would really tend to develop the resources of the colony far more than the extension beyond Roma, but that idea would not suit Brisbane. What was the object of this great continental railway scheme of the *Courier*? It was simply a trick, for he considered anything a trick that was intended to deceive. According to the Brisbane point of view, the extension beyond Roma should go north towards the north, and one scheme that had been carefully promulgated by the *Courier* was to

leave Tambo a little to the north and go by way of what was well known in the Mitchell district as the back track towards Isis Downs. That scheme was rotten to the core, because persons would not send their wool to Brisbane when they could send it to Rockhampton at less freight and with quicker despatch. He held that there was too much tendency to concentrate everything in Brisbane, and that, if continued, it would ultimately lead to separation. He hoped equal justice would be done to all portions of the colony. The North had been long-suffering and patient; they had received very little at the hands of the State although they contributed a great deal to the revenue, and this line to Charters Towers they were fully entitled to. He held with the railway policy of the Government, although he could not say he would support all the lines spurting out of Brisbane, such as the line to Sandgate, but he would not say he would oppose even that. He considered that the Government had shown a generous desire to give equal-handed justice to all portions of the colony in the distribution of this money for railway extensions. He believed they were as honest as any men who could be found in the colony, and, having trusted them to administer the Government of the country, the least hon. members could do was to consider their Loan Estimates instead of obstructing business.

Mr. TYREL objected to the remarks of the hon. member. He did not say the Government were not honest men, or that anything was a swindle; and as for the statement that the tin mines at Stanthorpe were worked out, he could say that during last month within two or three tons of 200 tons of tin were sent down. He did not think that looked like that place being worked out.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member could not deny that the yield of tin had greatly fallen off from what it used to be. He had not connected the hon. member with any swindle, but it must be confessed that the Stanthorpe line was likely to be one of the most unremunerative of railways, —more so, perhaps, than the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line. It was one of the batch of railways that was carried by the late Government for purely political purposes.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said that although it might be deemed that prolonging the debate was only a work of supererogation, when there was a simple way of getting out of the difficulty by passing the vote before them, still it was necessary as a duty that the members of the Opposition owed to their constituents and the country that they should do all in their power to resist the vote. During the debate several hon. members had charged the Opposition with having adopted a system of stonewalling and of

trying to use the iron-hand, but if ever there was an instance of an attempt to rule with an iron-hand it was in a threat which he was informed had been made by the Colonial Secretary—that if the vote was not passed by to-morrow he would keep the House sitting on Saturday and Sunday and until it was passed. That, however, was more than the hon. member could do. The hon. member for the Mitchell had indulged in a good deal of abuse of Brisbane, and it was almost impossible, after hearing that hon. member's remarks, to avoid coming to the conclusion that there was a following after the Colonial Secretary which was very inimical to the interests of that hon. gentleman's constituency. Then, again, the hon. Minister for Works had spoken about the tactics of the Opposition as if they were something very unusual, but the hon. gentleman was too old a politician not to know that such tactics were common in all countries where there were parliamentary institutions, and even in the Imperial Parliament; and surely the Opposition could not be blamed for adopting a course which would, under somewhat similar circumstances, be followed by the House of Commons, where many a tremendous battle had been fought out. It was said by hon. members opposite that they were merely doing what previous Governments had done. If that was the case he would retort by saying that the present Opposition were only doing what the late Opposition had done. After having met and heard a good many people on the tactics of the Opposition, they all seemed to say that if ever there was a time when these tactics were justified it was now. Besides, if these tactics were objectionable, the Press would be the first to sound the note of disapproval, and it would be re-echoed from one end of the colony to the other. The only sentiment he had met with was that of concurrence in the Opposition having resorted to these extreme measures to prevent a gigantic evil being perpetrated in the community. The member for Cook (Mr. Walsh) regarded with very great disfavour, no doubt, a sudden summons to come down and vote with his party, and he sympathised with him under the circumstances.

A long discussion here ensued on points of order.

Mr. RUTLEDGE, continuing, said that with reference to some remarks made by the hon. member for Cook on the railway scheme of the Government, he would point out that the House had been told, in effect, that they must accept the three trunk-line extensions or none. Where, then, was the liberty which it was alleged hon. members had of deciding which line they would have and which they would not? As to the allusions that had been made about disgraceful scenes, he believed it was a fact that the Parliament of this colony had

always stood high amongst Colonial Parliaments as to the manner in which it performed its functions, and he said that the attempt to degrade it and to deprive it of its exalted position had not come from the Opposition but from gentlemen who had not the ability to introduce a useful measure—whose sole capacity lay in preventing others doing work which would be beneficial to the country.

After further discussion,

The Committee adjourned from 1:30 to 2 a.m.

Mr. GRIMES moved that the Chairman leave the Chair, and report no progress; and after a discussion, during which Mr. Morehead delivered a humorous lecture on Wild Asses,

The Committee divided—Ayes, 9; Noes, 20.

Messrs. Grimes, Stevens, Morehead, and Simpson having continued the discussion,

Mr. KINGSFORD moved that the Chairman leave the Chair.

The Committee divided—Ayes, 9; Noes, 21.

After a short interval, the Committee again divided, with similar results.

At 4.35 a.m. the Committee adjourned for half-an-hour.

The discussion was resumed by Mr. Simpson (who read extracts from English history, and commented on them), Mr. Douglas, Mr. Grimes, and Mr. McLean.

The Committee adjourned from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Mr. NORTON expressed regret that his name should have appeared as voting with the Opposition. He had been caught napping, and did not feel at all honoured by the circumstance.

Mr. DICKSON called the attention of the Colonial Secretary to a newspaper telegram from Melbourne, stating that senior-constable King, of Queensland, had been locked up, suffering from *delirium tremens*. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would institute inquiries, and, if the officer was found guilty of drunkenness, see that he met with condign punishment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said if the officer had been guilty of anything wrong the matter would be dealt with by the Police Department. The hon. gentleman would be better employed in endeavouring to keep members on his own side from causing disgraceful scenes in the House when in a state of intoxication.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said there was nothing to show whether the telegram was true. Another telegram might contradict the first in the same way that Sir John Hay's death was contradicted. The hon. member (Mr. Dickson), who had acted as stage manager during the recent debate, should have directed his attention to the scenes which had taken place in the House. The officer

referred to had to his knowledge borne a high character in the force.

Mr. HAMILTON had known King for many years as an efficient officer and a credit to the police force. It was cowardly to attack a man on the strength of an anonymous paragraph, as being guilty of conduct which, if true, would compare favourably with that of some of those gentlemen with whom the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) continually associated in the House. If the hon. member spoke in the cause of morality he would have been better employed in attending to matters nearer home.

Mr. MOREHEAD called attention to a paragraph also appearing in the *Courier*, referring to the conduct of the member for Wide Bay (Mr. Price) and the member for Bundamba (Mr. Hendren); and said that the hon. member would be better employed in looking after his own followers than in going to the southern colonies to launch a covert charge against the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. PRICE said that although he might sometimes take the cup that cheers, he could appeal to the Speaker to say whether he had ever behaved in a disgraceful manner in the House, or obstructed the business. If he could stand as much drink as some members opposite he should be a better man than they. He was sorry for what had occurred.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he referred to the paragraph in the *Courier* as it stood, but he did not think the name of the member for Wide Bay should have been coupled in the manner it was with that of the hon. member for Bundamba. The former had never been offensive to anyone, nor interfered in any way with other people's concerns. The name of another hon. member, who took a prominent part in Wednesday's proceedings, should have been inserted in place of that of the member for Wide Bay.

Mr. PERSSE said he had known constable King for sixteen years, and there was not a better officer in the force. While tracking the Kellys he might have been subjected to hardship, and under certain circumstances a single glass of grog would make a man intoxicated. Men had been known to suffer from *delirium tremens* from drinking strong tea, which, in some cases, was just as bad as grog.

Mr. BEATTIE said some allowance should be made for individuals in certain cases. The Committee should remember the case of the postmaster, John Kelly, who after having been eighteen years in the service, and always bearing a good character, was re-tried on a charge of drunkenness that had been disproved.

Mr. ARCHER said there was no parallel between the cases. If as much was proved against King as against Kelly he ought to be dismissed.

Mr. DICKSON said he had not attacked the officer, but had only called the Colonial Secretary's attention to the circumstance. He asked the Government to give way on the resolution before the Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that even if the Government were inclined to give way their supporters would not let them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said they had no intention of giving way one inch. As to the charge against senior-constable King, it was brought by the hon. member for Enoggera as a covert attack upon the Government. The hon. gentleman's conduct was wholly inexcusable and unfair. It was cowardly and unmanly. He had no business, on the grounds of a telegram in a newspaper, to gibbet a man's name through the whole colony.

Mr. STEVENSON was addressing the Committee on the position of public business when,

The SPEAKER took the chair, and the sitting lapsed at 10 o'clock a.m.