

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 26 AUGUST 1879

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 26 August, 1879.

Petition.—Supply—Loan Estimates.

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

PETITION.

Mr. ARCHER presented a petition from electors of Blackall against the provisions of the Divisional Boards Bill.

Petition received.

SUPPLY—LOAN ESTIMATES.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) moved that the Speaker leave the chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. MILES said that as he had not had an opportunity of being in the House yesterday afternoon, when the discussion arose in reference to the statement of the hon. member for North Brisbane, he particularly wished to say that he exceedingly regretted the course taken by that hon. member. They were about to launch the colony into a very large ex-

penditure on trunk lines into the interior—or, to use an expression once made use of by the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan) in times gone by—to the land of gum-trees and bullocks. He wished to impress on Government that it was but justice that the pastoral tenants should bear their share of the interest on the amount of money to be expended, and he had no hesitation in saying that there was every reason they should do so, when, by the action of the House last night, they had increased the value of pastoral properties in the interior by at least 50 per cent. The pastoral commission agents would, in a few days, be coming out with flourishing advertisements of pastoral properties for sale, stating that they were within a few miles of the terminus of one of the trunk lines of railway authorised by the Queensland Parliament. There was not the slightest doubt about that. At whose cost were these railways to be built? At the cost of the country: and yet the leader of the Opposition had not the moral courage to get up and say he would not be a party to these properties being doubled in value at the expense of the country. Not one word had been said about increasing the pastoral rents. Some of those properties would change hands, and, unless it was now clearly understood that pastoral rents be increased to pay interest and loss on working, they would have the purchasers coming down with complaints that they had suffered by an act of repudiation. He warned them that there would be a day of retaliation. The hon. member (Mr. Griffith) did not take up the ground that, before the passing of the vote, some conditions should be agreed to by which pastoral tenants should bear at all events the interest of the money to be expended for their benefit. He protested against the injustice of saddling the whole country with the cost of taking these railways to the land of gum-trees and bullocks. Hitherto the farmers had built the railways and had paid the interest on the borrowed money, and they ought to have heard that the Government intended to accompany their proposals with a further proposition to increase the rent of the pastoral lessees. He emphatically protested against the action of the Government, and hoped to have an opportunity of putting his protest into practical form. The plans and sections and books of reference of the lines had still to be approved, and if he then could get a few members of his side of the House to assist him he would do what he could to enforce his views. He denied that the minority must be ruled by the majority. When there was wrong and injustice being done to a large community the minority had a perfect right to fight against it.

Mr. KINGSFORD also availed himself of the opportunity to express his opinion of what had occurred last evening. He had not been able to be present; had it been his privilege to be here he, for one, would never have given way. With regard to the first item on the Loan Estimate, he would not have the slightest objection if the effect was to increase the value of the properties of the pastoral tenants by 50 per cent.; but he would be indeed sorry if the increase in the value of those properties were at the expense of other sections of the community. He did not quite agree with the hon. member (Mr. Miles) that the minority ought not as a rule to bow to the decision of the majority; it was the right of the minority when beaten to submit, but he disputed utterly that the opinions of a majority of the Opposition were represented last night in the House, and he emphatically disputed the right of the leader of the Opposition to take upon himself to haul down the colours which had been nailed to the mast by members of the Opposition. He was never more astonished in his life than when he saw an account, this morning, of the proceedings of last night. It was utterly inexplicable to him that that result should have been obtained when the hon. gentleman must remember that at their last meeting the Opposition were unanimously resolved to resist to the bitter end.

The Hon. S. W. GRIFFITH: When was that? I was not there.

Mr. KINGSFORD said the hon. gentleman was there. He (Mr. Kingsford) did not choose to be led by proxy, and, when an extra day had been taken in the week for the Government business, he had never known a party meeting to be called on Monday when many hon. members were of necessity absent, as was the case yesterday. That meeting ought to have been postponed till to-day; there was no necessity for its having been held; there were plenty of hon. members to have carried on the debate last night and to have obstructed till to-day, and they would have been perfectly justified in doing so. He, therefore, in the face of what had happened, considered that he was thoroughly released from all allegiance to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Griffith); he would not submit any longer to be led by such a thing—he was not worth the name of a leader, and it was little better than an insult that those hon. members who had undertaken the task of obstructing a powerful Government should be led by him. It had always been furthest from his (Mr. Kingsford's) intention, and was now, to obstruct without cause, but if five or six good men would assist him he would obstruct the Government still further for the purpose of eliciting a little more information than they had as yet obtained. The Opposition side of

the House had been thoroughly sold, and he hoped the time would never come when that would happen again. The hon. gentleman knew that he (Mr. Kingsford) would not submit, and he had consequently done him (Mr. Kingsford) a great injustice. He hoped the party would never again acknowledge the hon. gentleman as leader; at any rate, he should never lead him (Mr. Kingsford). The party had not been consulted, and he thoroughly deprecated the way in which the results obtained had been brought about.

Mr. BAILEY said that many years ago Lord Byron was a great friend of Leigh Hunt, and befriended him on many occasions and for many years; but when Lord Byron died Leigh Hunt was the first man to write a cruel satire upon his former patron. As a parallel case, about the same time there was a menagerie travelling about in which there was a lion, and in the cage with it a poodle dog. The lion was the friend and protector of the poodle, and gave it of his food; but by-and-bye the lion died, and how the poodle desecrated the body of the dead lion hon. members might imagine. The speech which the hon. member (Mr. Kingsford) had just made reminded him most forcibly of the incident. He hoped the House would never have the misfortune to hear such a speech again. What had the leader of the Opposition not done for his party during this session? He had devoted all his energies to the service of the State, and no one had stood up oftener to advocate the opinions of himself and his party with all the legal knowledge and acumen he was known to possess. There was not a man present who had not a most sincere admiration for the talents and abilities of the leader of the Opposition.

HON. MEMBERS on both sides: Hear, hear.

Mr. BAILEY said the hon. gentleman might be over-cautious at times, but caution was quite as necessary to the conduct of public business as the effervescing nonsense which some hon. members in their zeal gave way to. He hoped the hon. gentleman would treat the attack made on him with the contempt it deserved. Now that the hon. gentleman was down, every fool thought he might have a kick at him.

HON. MEMBERS: He is not down.

Mr. BAILEY said that as to the party meeting to which the hon. member (Mr. Kingsford) referred, at which it was determined to obstruct the business of the country to the bitter end, he knew of no such meeting. It was not a breach of confidence to state that, at the last meeting of the party, no course of obstruction was decided upon. It would have been folly to have gone on with obstruction when they saw that obstruction was useless; and when that was seen the party very properly threw up the sponge. When

the time for discussion was passed, the leader of the Opposition well knew that to prolong it would only delay the business of the country. He hoped they would hear no more of these attacks—from this side of the House, at anyrate—upon their leader. If the hon. gentleman was unfit to occupy the position of leader, where were they to look for another? There was not another in the House.

Mr. MACKAY said he had gradually come to the conclusion that the business of politics was a mean occupation; and if further conviction were needed it was afforded by the slight that had been thrown upon the leader of the Opposition. He (Mr. Mackay) had never a doubt in his mind as to the position he should take with regard to the proposed extension of the trunk lines;—he had opposed them from the commencement, as being premature; but the leader of the Opposition had never left his party in doubt as to his (Mr. Griffith's) opinions on the subject. He had all along understood that the hon. gentleman was committed to those trunk lines; and, knowing that such was the case, it came with very bad grace from an hon. member who might conscientiously differ from him on the subject to say that the leader of the Opposition had betrayed the trust confided to him. No member would be more glad than himself (Mr. Mackay) if the trunk lines paid, and that could be best brought about by connecting them with wharfage. They would have no further opposition from him. It was an anomalous position that the colony had an extensive system of railroading without any immediate connection with deep-water; and the Government might be reasonably urged, seeing that they were the victors in the struggle that had taken place, to come down with a supplementary estimate for making that connection between the Southern and Western Railway and the wharves in Brisbane which was so urgently wanted. He could bear testimony to the manly way in which the leader of the Opposition had conducted the business of his party from the commencement of the session up to the present time, and had often admired the manner in which he had performed duties which were not so easy and pleasant as some hon. members might suppose. The hon. gentleman had his fullest confidence, and the admiration which he had felt for him from the first had been raised in an immense degree by his conduct in this matter. If he (Mr. Mackay) continued to have the honour of a seat here he should never wish for a better leader than the hon. gentleman, for he was a man who would not lead his followers into mistakes, but would deal with them conscientiously, listening carefully to what they had to say, and agreeing with them or differing from

them as the case might be. As far as he (Mr. Mackay) was concerned he should continue to be as faithful to the leader of the Opposition as he had ever been—if possible, more so, seeing that the public opinion was for the time against him—a fact which he (Mr. Mackay) deeply regretted.

Mr. HILL said he had been quite taken by surprise at the extraordinary attack made upon the leader of the Opposition by two of his own followers—the hon. members for Darling Downs and for South Brisbane.

Mr. MILLS said he had made no attack on the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Hear, hear.

Mr. HILL said he was very glad to hear the disclaimer, because the hon. member certainly did indulge in some insinuations. There was no mistaking the direct attack, made in the most undeserved manner, by the hon. member (Mr. Kingsford). It was a surprise to him in every way. The leader of the Opposition had from the first been fighting against fearful odds, and, although he might perhaps thoroughly believe in the justice of the course he had pursued, still there was no doubt he was forced into it by the majority of his followers. At all events, there could be no better proof of the feeling of the House than the division which took place last night—27 to 12. The hon. gentleman faced calmly the fearful odds against him, and did not lose a chance, in spite of the overwhelming majority against him who were determined to carry their point—who were prepared to sit here for the rest of the year, if necessary, to do so. He (Mr. Hill) was not a servile follower of the Government, and did not hesitate to say that there was not in the House a more independent member than himself. He was not the delegate of a constituency. He did not care for his constituents further than that he was determined to represent them to the best of his ability; but he did not intend to falsify his conscience by voting for anything of which he did not thoroughly approve as being for the best interests of the colony at large. As to the statement so often made, that these railways would benefit one class alone, he utterly denied it, and he contended that they would be much more to the advantage of merchants and residents in towns, and to the general development of the colony, than to the squatters themselves; and, for his own part, it would not affect him if every mile of railway was knocked on the head to-morrow. As to the leader of the Opposition, the House and the country would give him every credit for what he had done; and the hon. gentleman stood higher in his (Mr. Hill's) estimation than ever he had done before. The hon. gentleman had acted with honesty and courage, for it was

sometimes more courageous to acknowledge a defeat than to fight to the last gasp. As for the threat that the leader of the Opposition should be deposed, he could only say, as a supporter of the Ministerial party, that he should be very glad to see somebody else lead the Opposition. He did not believe they had another man fit for the position, or one fit to live in the same parish with the hon. gentleman who now occupied that post.

Mr. GRIFFITH: In the remarks I have to make I shall endeavour not to be carried away by the feelings which naturally occupy my mind; and to those hon. members who have given me credit for honesty of purpose and for doing my best for the party, I can only express my warmest thanks. As to the hon. member (Mr. Kingsford), I can only say that it would have been at least fairer if, before making his statement to the House, he had asked me for information as to what had taken place yesterday during his absence, before he accused me of betraying my trust as leader of the party. I will briefly state the events as they took place. Last Wednesday, about midnight, the Government proposed to go on with their railway vote. To this I objected, and the party spontaneously and without any previous concert whatever on the subject objected to go into a matter of such great importance at that hour. Whether we were justified in that spontaneous action is entirely beside the question. I think it was perfectly justifiable, and I have seen it done on various occasions before. From that time up to the adjournment of the House on Friday at midday there was no opportunity of calling the party together. I do not know what the hon. member, Mr. Kingsford, means when he speaks of a meeting of the party at which it was resolved to fight this matter out to the bitter end. If I still retained the confidence of the party I ought to have had notice of that meeting, or at least to have been informed of the result of it. Up to this moment I have never heard of any such meeting. That there was any formal meeting of the party is quite unknown to me, and I believe there was none. At any rate, if any such meeting was held it was held in my absence and without my being informed of the result of it, in which case their leader is not their leader any longer. I can assure hon. members that the course of events has been most anxiously watched by me, and I have taken the utmost pains in trying to decide what was best to be done under the circumstances. We were in this position, that after the adjournment on Friday I had a right to conclude that those members who were determined to see the matter out to the end would have been in their places yesterday, and that those who were not here yesterday—when they could

have been—did not intend to persist in any permanent course of obstruction. I was aware that one hon. member (Mr. Miles) could not be in his place, and wrote him a letter, to meet him on his way down by train, expressing my views on the subject. With that exception, all the other members of the party could have been present by 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon. Seeing the difficulty I was placed in, I obtained by the indulgence of the Government an opportunity to consult with those of the Opposition who were on the spot, and they all, with one exception, met. Does the hon. member (Mr. Kingsford) suppose I made the announcement I did at 7 o'clock last night without having first consulted my party? The fact is, we were in earnest consultation from 4 o'clock to 6, and the members present cordially concurred in authorising me to make the announcement I did. In what way have I failed to perform my duty as leader of the party? I should like to know how else I could have performed it. Surely, the hon. member might have given me that credit for honesty of purpose to which, I trust, I have established some claim, even if he does not give me credit for having consulted my party. Some of them would have liked to go in for a course of deliberate obstruction, but, as I have often said before, I do not believe that obstruction, in the sense of "stonewalling" the Government, is the proper way of opposing a policy, and I am still of that opinion. What did they want me to do? If I have the honour to lead a party, I intend to be the leader of a party throughout the colony, and not of a party tied to one corner of it. I do not care what constituency I represent, or whether I represent one at all; but so long as I have a seat in Parliament I shall regard the interests of the colony as a whole. I have the satisfaction of believing, in spite of the observations that have been made, that I am still considered one of the leaders, if not the leader, of the Liberal party in the colony. What would be thought of my consistency if, after all I have said—after the announcement of the policy of the late Government I made in the northern and central parts of the colony, in almost exactly the same words I made use of as a candidate for North Brisbane—after a precisely similar policy had been announced in the Governor's Speech in January, when the late Government were in power, I had come here and said I would make one of a party to resist by all possible means—by stonewalling—a policy which differed from that which we had enunciated only in the financial portion of it? That is my particular objection to the present policy of the Government, and it is the only difference between the policy of the late Government and that of the present Government, although, as I pointed out

yesterday, that difference may be and will be remedied. I have foreseen the present difficulty for a long time past and have endeavoured to avoid it. I have been unsuccessful in that, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have done everything in my power to carry out the ideas with regard to this policy which I have always expressed, and that the bulk of the Opposition concurred with me in the conclusion that we should not have been justified in taking any other course than that which we adopted last night, and rather than do so I would very much prefer to give up the position of leader of the party. I was perfectly aware, yesterday, in counselling my party as I did, that I was imperilling my position as their leader, even imperilling my seat for Brisbane, and imperilling my popularity in the colony; but none of these considerations induced me to take any other course than that which I conceived to be the right one under the circumstances. I have acted perfectly straightforwardly; and, if I am condemned by a section of the Press and of the public opinion of the colony, I have full confidence that it will be in the future as it has been in the past with all leaders of the Liberal Party in this colony who ventured to go against a section of public opinion in Brisbane, and that that condemnation will be only temporary, and that my straightforward conduct will, in the end, meet with the recognition it deserves. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Kingsford), although I feel strongly inclined to comment upon them, I will only say that I never asked him to follow me, and that I shall not ask him to follow me—neither him nor any other member; and I shall give them the earliest opportunity of electing another leader. As to the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Miles), I did not understand him to be attacking me, although I know he dissents from my views. I can only say that I have nothing to retract, nothing to regret, in anything that took place with regard to the proceedings of last night.

The PREMIER: Although quite a sufficient answer has been given to the charges made by the hon. member (Mr. Kingsford), I feel I should not be discharging my duty were I not to express here, and through the pages of *Hansard* to the country, the deep feeling of pain that came over the whole House when they heard the words applied by that hon. member to the leader of the Opposition. There is a spirit of fair-play in the House that is far above party considerations, and what has taken place is quite as much a matter of regret on this side as on the other. I have no reason to go out of the way to praise the hon. gentleman. I am opposing

him every day in the year, and I can only say that his ability as a leader and his talent in debate have given me great cause of anxiety, and have won from me a respect that I have no hesitation in expressing. The assistance I have continually received from him in the work of legislation I have already acknowledged, and I cannot sit down without expressing my disgust that an hon. gentleman occupying the position of leader of the Opposition should have been talked about in the abominable strain adopted by the hon. member for South Brisbane.

Mr. McLEAN said that, in consequence of the coach in which he was travelling having been detained through the bad state of the roads, he had not been present when the arrangement of last evening, which had been referred to, was made, and he should like to say a few words on the subject. Like many others, he felt very strongly on the question, but the leader of the Opposition knew that he was prepared to acquiesce in the decision of the party. In speaking on the subject last evening he should like to have said more, but could not trust himself, being under the influence of strong feelings, to say all he should have liked. He was sorry that the hon. member for South Brisbane should have been carried away to say on the spur of the moment what he would, no doubt, in his cooler moments regret. He (Mr. McLean) had always entertained a high opinion of the leader of the Opposition, and should always be prepared to follow him as long as he was prepared to lead in the right direction. While feeling very strongly that it was a waste of money to carry out those lines of railway, he had no intention of condemning the action taken by the leader of the Opposition, and other hon. members, in his absence.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer): Before the question is put, I should like to say a few words, as a very consistent opponent of the hon. member for North Brisbane. We have been opposed to one another longer than any other two members of the House; but opposed as I have always been to him, I have never hesitated to express my opinion of his great ability and talent in leading any party with which he has been connected. So far from having failed as leader of the present Opposition during the proceedings of last week, I consider he excelled himself. I have been sorry all day—sorry when I saw the attack on the hon. gentleman in the leading paper; more sorry when I saw the quite unwarranted attack in the evening paper; and more sorry still since I heard the hon. member for South Brisbane, who generally speaks in a calm and quiet way, so far led away by his feelings. I know the hon. member to be a straightforward and honest man, and I be-

lieve no one will more deeply regret the language he has used than he will as soon as he recovers from his little bit of temper. Those remarks were entirely uncalled for. I have led an Opposition for years, and I know the difficulties, trials, and troubles that any leader of an Opposition has to encounter. The position is anything but a bed of roses. It is even more onerous than the position of leader of a Government, because he has more to contend with and has no patronage or honours to give in return for services; and I consider that the way in which the hon. gentleman has led his party this session deserves every credit.

Mr. KINGSFORD said if he had been understood to say anything derogatory to the character of the leader of the Opposition he most respectfully apologised. He did not remember having made use of any such expression, but might have done so in the heat of the moment. He did not doubt the ability of the hon. gentleman, nor the manner in which he had led the Opposition, as might be inferred from the speeches indulged in by hon. members opposite. The only thing he complained of was, that the hon. gentleman had not acted fairly towards the party in coming to an arrangement with the Government without consulting it. The decision of the party was, that the debate should be continued. When he said "to the bitter end" he did not mean until some calamity overtook them, or until one party was exhausted, but until some arrangement was made which would be satisfactory to both sides. If he had said anything he ought not to have said, or used language which should not have been used, he was very sorry for it; but, as to the cause, he still maintained that the hon. gentleman had not acted as he ought to have done.

Mr. PATERSON said, with regard to what had transpired recently, he was moved by two feelings—one, of the strongest gratitude to the hon. gentleman for the manner in which, as leader of the Opposition, he had worked for his party since he (Mr. Paterson) had been in the House; and the other, of deep sorrow for what had transpired this evening. In saying that, he believed he was expressing the feelings of many other hon. members of the Opposition.

Mr. WALSH said he had listened to the remarks of the hon. member for South Brisbane with the deepest regret. When that hon. member reflected he would, no doubt, be sorry for the unwarrantable expressions he had made use of. Although a small section might now blame the leader of the Opposition, the country would be with him, and always had been.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the whole of the debate might have been avoided if the Opposition had settled their affairs outside, and he thought they were laying it too

thick on the leader of the Opposition. He had the highest respect for the hon. gentleman, but if they flattered him into a demigod he did not know what might happen. The hon. member for South Brisbane was also an honourable man, and he had spoken from the heart. If he had used a few strong words, no doubt he had good reason for it; and there was no reason why the whole sympathy of both sides of the House should be poured out on the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member had a perfect right to express his opinion without having torrents of abuse and vials of wrath poured out from all directions upon him. With regard to the hon. member for North Brisbane, they were laying on their admiration with a trowel. No doubt, he deserved every credit and consideration at the hands of his party, as it was well known that he had refused one of the highest offices in the land; but, at the same time, there was no reason for almost worshipping him. Such conduct from hon. members on the Ministerial side argued either a desire to wean the hon. gentleman from the present Opposition, or else fear. For himself, he promised that if the hon. gentleman came over to that side he should go over to the other.

Mr. GARRICK said the hon. member for Mitchell was to be thanked for his little speeches, which acted as a tonic upon hon. members. The hon. member for South Brisbane was as honourable a man as there was in the House, and that was the most painful part of the business. He was one of the most faithful followers, and, therefore, the remarks were doubly hard from him. It was very painful that this should be the result of such a long career, and honourable career, as that of the hon. member for North Brisbane. No other hon. member of the House had worked harder or more loyally, or shown more capacity to manage a party. He (Mr. Garrick) had followed, he might say with the greatest pleasure, a leader who had steered his party through very great difficulties to very great successes. After such long labours it was poor reward to have one of the most faithful soldiers in the whole ranks fall away. He (Mr. Garrick) did not remember the agreement of the party to take the particular step the hon. member alluded to. It was agreed at one meeting unanimously that the Loan Estimates should be resisted, but he did not think there was any meeting of the party after that—indeed, the Premier forced the matter on so quickly and urgently that no time was given after Wednesday night to take counsel. He hoped the hon. member for North Brisbane would reconsider his determination, as far as the party were concerned, because he believed that no member in the House could lead as well as he had done.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was glad the leader of the Opposition had got a few knocks this evening, as when everything went on smoothly people were apt to forget themselves. The hon. gentleman was a young leader, though, no doubt, very able, and this would teach him for the future not to look at the world from a Brisbane point of view. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) was delighted with the speech the hon. gentleman had made in his own defence; and were he in the place of the hon. member for South Brisbane, following such a leader, he should not come into the House and say he was sold and for the future would not follow such "a thing." Such expressions rarely came from the hon. member, and no one would be more sorry than he for having used them. The hon. gentleman, however, would lower himself if he resigned the leadership of the party because he had got a few knocks. If he did what was right he would always offend. Hon. members might be kicked about to-day and praised to-morrow, but if they allowed themselves to be influenced by every little wave of public opinion, they would never be fit for anything. It was a very easy thing to guide the vessel in calm water, but when she got among the breakers the captain was proved. If he (Mr. O'Sullivan) differed from his leader he should simply resign, and not make an exhibition in the House. He had no intention of patting the hon. gentleman on the back. From the time when he first came into the House he had been in opposition to the hon. gentleman, and he hoped long to be so. That opposition, however, would never darken his admiration for him as a gentleman, a scholar, and a leader.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he was not in the House when the hon. member for South Brisbane made his statement, but he gathered that the hon. member laboured under a misconception that hon. members on that side had banded themselves together to oppose the proposition of the Government to the bitter end—that was to say, until they forced some suspension of the Standing Orders, or a motion to the effect that the question be now put. It was quite true that a meeting had been held the other night, after the leader of the Opposition retired, at which it was determined that hon. members should continue the debate until the forms of the House enabled them to retire on Friday; but it was distinctly understood that any further action should be left to an expression of opinion on the part of the party subsequently. He was very sorry the hon. member should have indulged in reflection on the leader of the Opposition in that public manner; if he wished to challenge the action of the hon. gentleman he could have done so in a private committee-room.

From what had taken place it might be supposed that the Opposition were a set of radicals requiring to be restrained by the moderation and sober judgment of the hon. member for North Brisbane. The leader of the Opposition saw that any further struggle would be useless, and hon. members recognised the fact that it would be insanity to carry it on any longer. The deliberately expressed opinion of the Opposition was, therefore, that the suggestion of the hon. gentleman should be adopted. With regard to his peculiar views about the three trunk-lines, that was a matter between him and his constituents, and after awhile they would overlook the fact that he had supported a policy some of them did not approve of, in view of his great services to his party in the House and the country at large. He (Mr. Rutledge) had the very greatest admiration for the hon. gentleman, and hoped that he would not so far weaken the party as to carry out his expressed intention of resigning. He fervently hoped the hon. gentleman would reconsider his determination and not allow the feelings of irritation caused by the strictures of the hon. member for South Brisbane to lead him to take a course which would be regretted throughout the country.

Mr. STEVENSON said that if the debate had no other good effect, he hoped it would teach the Opposition in future to wash their dirty linen at home, instead of bringing it into the House and borrowing soap and sympathy from the Ministerial side.

Mr. REA said the hon. member for South Brisbane had, no doubt on the spur of the moment, been hurried into making use of an expression which he would afterwards regret. It added to the dignity of the leader of the Opposition that he led independent men, governed by individual convictions without fear or favour, which could not be said of a great number of the subservient members on the other side. He (Mr. Rea) respected the leader of the Opposition as much as any member of the House; he admired the patience with which he had borne the insults of those on the Ministerial side of the House who had taunted him in all directions with accusations of bribery and corruption by designating the last Government as the most corrupt that ever existed in the colony. He further admired the manner in which the hon. gentleman had detected attempts made by the other side of the House to carry, by a packed majority, Acts that should never have been proposed or even entertained. The hon. member for Stanley said that whatever difference there might be in the party there should be no divergence inside the Chamber; but he contended that was the proper place to speak out what their convictions were, but when it came to a crisis they should be faithful and loyal to their leader. He respected

and admired the hon. gentleman who had drawn from members commendations on the forbearance he had shown towards hon. members on the other side of the House. He hoped it would not be supposed that members on the Opposition were not determined to resist, as long as they could, the Government forcing measures entailing taxation upon the country without giving the fullest information.

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

The CHAIRMAN said the question was that £416,000 be granted for branch lines.

Mr. MILES said he had thrown no slur upon the leader of the Opposition, or imputed any motives. He had merely expressed his regret that the hon. gentleman had not seen fit, before allowing the vote for main trunk lines to pass, to lay down a condition and impress upon the Government the necessity of bringing down a measure to tax the pastoral lessees who would be benefited by the lines; and he hoped the hon. gentleman would yet take the earliest opportunity of telling the Government that, if they would not do it, he would, when he got into power, make the "Colorado beetles" pay for the work.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I said so plainly yesterday.

Mr. MILES said that, as it seemed the hon. gentleman had taken all the precautions that he wished, he would apologise for his remarks. He believed he was justified in saying that the Opposition were unanimous in desiring that their leader should table a vote of want of confidence. At the meeting at which this course was decided upon, some members of the party wanted to know what was to be done in the event of the motion being defeated, and the hon. gentleman then said, "It will be time enough to consider that when the motion has been disposed of;" and therefore he (Mr. Miles) regretted that the hon. member for South Brisbane should have used the strong language that he did. He felt sick when he heard the news that the Opposition had given in, and he felt sick now; and the struggling people of the colony would feel sick when they had to pay the interest on the loan. Although he regretted the hon. member for South Brisbane's language, he still thought the great majority of the people had been sold like bullocks. He knew that the hon. member for North Brisbane was not a good stonewaller, and that he was placed in a peculiar position. He rather disliked the applause that had been given to the hon. member by the Government side. When the hon. member opposed the Electoral Rolls Bill he was abused by the other side, but the moment he played into their hands they commended him. He had more respect for the hon. member than was entertained by all the members opposite put together, but he was

not going to pat him on the back. The hon. member had stated that he could not consult him, but he (Mr. Miles) had consulted him. He wired him the following telegram yesterday :—

“Down by half-past 10. If compromise, should be on condition no money borrowed for extending trunk lines until plans approved. Pastoral rents increased to pay interest and loss on working.”

He got a letter from the hon. gentleman, and the purport of it made him feel sick. The hon. gentleman was not a good stonewaller; his policy was peace and quietness. Hon. members opposite need not shout before they were out of the wood. If he could get a few members to assist him, the plans and books of reference for the main trunk lines should first have to be produced and approved.

The Hon. G. THORN asked whether the Premier or Minister for Works would give any information about the branch lines?

Mr. WALSH suggested that the lines should be taken *seriatim*.

Mr. McLEAN was understood to say that he should not be doing his duty to his constituents unless he asked what the intentions of the Government were with reference to a railway to the Logan? His constituents were distinctly under the impression that the Loan Estimates would be so altered as to make provision for this line; but he disabused their mind of that idea. At a deputation which waited upon the Minister for Works, the hon. member for Stanley suggested that as the Burrum line was to be built by a company, the money put down for it should be devoted to the Logan railway; but the Minister for Works, whilst expressing himself favourably regarding the line, said that could not be done. He believed the Premier was also favourably disposed to the construction of a line to the Logan, and so was the Colonial Secretary. The question of the route he would leave to the engineers and the Government to decide: there were several surveys to the Logan. When the Colonial Secretary promised a railway to the Logan electorate—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member must have been indulging in spiritualism. He never made such a promise, never being in the position to do so.

Mr. McLEAN said the Colonial Secretary made the promise at Beenleigh.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Colonial Secretary has never been to Beenleigh.

Mr. McLEAN said that, at all events, the Hon. A. H. Palmer had been there, and, as a private gentleman, had promised to use his influence to get a railway to Beenleigh.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He did not.

Mr. McLEAN said that, apart from that point, the Government should state whether they intended to make a railway to the

Logan electorate. A large number of his constituents were distant from forty to sixty miles from water carriage, and in their interests he asked the question. He would also ask the Government for an expression of opinion with regard to a railway to South Brisbane? In order to develop their coal industry it was indispensable that their railway system should be taken to deep-water.

The PREMIER said the policy of the Government regarding branch lines was contained in the Loan Estimates, and until they were passed the hon. member would not extract from him whether the Government intended to make the railways he had named. He had never yet seen a promise extracted from the Government under such circumstances as the present. A great deal was to be said in favour of both the lines alluded to, but the Government declined to state their intentions now, and did not think it was fair they should be asked to do so.

Mr. McLEAN said he was not in favour of obstructing the branch railways on the Estimates. He should be happy to see them passed, but a large number of people in his electorate, and in Brisbane, were under the impression that the Premier was favourably disposed to the construction of a line to the Logan. They knew that these Loan Estimates were intended to cover a period of three years, and therefore he wished to know whether the Government meant to provide for that line by any other means before the three years expired? He was not going to deprive other districts of railways because his district was not favoured; and he did not want the Premier to pledge himself if it would be endangering his position, but he was entitled to an opinion from the Government.

Mr. MILES said, seeing that the hon. member for Maryborough had given notice of a Bill to encourage the construction of railways by private enterprise, which he presumed had reference to the Burrum line, he would suggest that the Premier should withdraw the item of £54,000 for that line. He could well remember an occasion when the Premier declared it was monstrous to propose a line to the Burrum for the development of the coal properties of a few individuals, yet hon. members found provision for it on the Estimates. He presumed the Government wanted to borrow the money simply with a view to lodging it in the bank. As to the Sandgate line they had not the slightest intention of making it, and he presumed the £52,000 set down for that line was also intended to be deposited with the bank. Seeing that the owners of the Burrum coal mines were willing to construct the railway themselves, the Government should not saddle the country with the cost of that line.

Mr. WALSH said he should like to ask the Premier whether he intended to make a railway from Cooktown to Maytown, for of all the districts in the colony his was most entitled to a railway. It appeared that every district in the colony but his had a railway. He had hoped that the railway policy of the Government would have been of a reproductive nature—that it would not be a tax upon the colony but would pay interest upon the cost of construction; and, holding that opinion, he could not help condemning the railway to Sandgate. The expenditure for it was not warranted. Sandgate was the most wretched place he had ever seen, and, looking at the matter from a commercial point of view, there was no population there to create a traffic. He doubted very much, moreover, whether the line could be made for the sum stated. The railway scheme of the Government seemed to be very general; and few members would complain at it, for all or nearly all were to have a railway; but his constituents, no doubt, would be somewhat disappointed at his failing to get them one. Before he left for the north, he pointed out to the Government that a railway in his district would be more productive than three-fourths of the line now being or about to be made; he did his best to place the matter before the Government, but it appeared his representations had no weight with the Treasurer. He regretted this, because he took it that the only course would be to build the Cooktown line hereafter, in order to make up the deficiency arising from the railways now to be constructed. That was just what they would do. They had at the back of Cooktown, as most members who knew anything at all of the district were aware, an immense mineral area, upon which there was only a small population settled. The Palmer goldfield was 400 square miles in extent; only a little patch of it had been worked, and that patch gave a return of something like $2\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of gold to the ton. Was it not desirable, in the interests of the country, that something should be done for the development of that district? He held that it was; and if nothing was to be done for that purpose, then the sooner the district was abandoned and the poll-tax upon the Chinese was repealed, and they were allowed to occupy the place the better—because in such a district, with so many natural disadvantages, and yet with such good prospects, it was necessary to do something to try and assist the development of such an important industry as mining. Not alone had they such a large mining area, but some of the richest agricultural land in the colony lying waste at the present time. It was something deplorable to see that almost ever since the colony had been a colony they had

been continually trying to prevent capital from coming into it, and at the same time they were always passing measures to borrow money, and running deeper and deeper into debt, until, in the long run, nothing would save them but composition of 5s. or 10s. in the £. That would be the ultimate result. By legislation they prevented people from coming here and utilizing the fertile lands of the colony, and at the same time they were borrowing money for railways and other public works, and carrying on in a way that would end in nothing but bankruptcy. He hoped before they came to a state of insolvency they would awaken to their senses, and look after the interests of the colony as a whole. There was no cause for wonder that his constituents should be dissatisfied when they saw that Bundaberg had got a railway, and that another £100,000 was to be voted for it. When that railway was completed there would be about one train a-year run if there could be anyone found to take charge of the engine; and he must, on behalf of his constituents and in the interests of justice and fair-play, enter his protest against some of these lines. However, he could not charge the present Government with the Bundaberg line, which was a thing of the past—and perhaps it was wise that, having gone so far, they should extend that line to Mount Perry, in order that it might be of use at some future day when the price of copper rose sufficiently to allow the mines there to be worked, but he feared the prospects of that were very poor. Seeing, as he said before, that the object of the Committee was to make railways where there was likely to be something for them to carry, he could give hon. members some idea of the goods that were being landed at Cooktown. The way he arrived at this was from the fees paid for wharfages. The rate charged was 2s. per ton for all goods being landed, and judging from the rent the lessees had to pay there was at the present time from 1,000 to 1,200 tons of goods being landed there monthly. Compare that with the quantity of goods landed at Bundaberg, and he would ask, in the name of common-sense, had not his constituents a right to a railway? But their wants were completely ignored, and they very justly complained that most of the money given to the North was always spent on Townsville. That was certainly not just or fair, because for the last five years Cooktown had contributed to the public revenue, and was still contributing nearly if not quite as much as Townsville, and yet what did they get as compared with that town? The amount set down for his district, which was big enough for a colony in itself, was something like £50,000 for public works. They were quite prepared

to pay the interest upon the money spent there on public works. They did not want to saddle the other portions of the colony with interest for those works—at any rate, he for one did not, but he was quite prepared to pay the interest, so that no part of the colony could say they were paying the interest upon works for that district. He only wished the residents of his district could say the same of the other portions of the colony, for which they had to pay interest to a large extent. He should be wanting in his duty if he did not express his conviction that the line to Sandgate was one Parliament was not justified in making. That was his honest conviction, and, although it differed from the opinion of the party with whom he generally acted, he felt that he must say what he really thought. If he did not protest in this way—perhaps he might not have another opportunity of doing so—he almost feared facing his constituents: he might meet with the same fate as some landlords in Ireland. He had their interests entrusted to him; and, although he had done his best, still they might think he had not done all he ought to have done. He would not inflict upon hon. members figures in support of the statements he had made with regard to the trade of his district, but he could assure any hon. member who had any doubts on the subject that he had figures to prove that not alone was the trade of Cooktown larger than that of Townsville during the last five years, but that it had only been excelled by Rockhampton. It was not necessary to go into imports and exports, which would be of no interest to the Committee, but seeing that their exports of gold for five years up to the 31st March amounted to £3,042,422, which had found its way into different channels of industry throughout the colony, they were entitled to a little more consideration than they had received; and although it was too late to remedy it now, he hoped that whoever had the framing of the next loan estimates that came before the House would—having regard to the vast resources and capabilities of his district—give it, at any rate, some slight consideration.

Mr. BAYNES took exception to that portion of the hon. member's speech in which he stated that his constituency was the only one that had been neglected. Such was not the case. He (Mr. Baynes) had the honour to represent a district which had been neglected more than any district in the colony, not only in regard to railways but in roadways. He held in his hand a report placed upon the table a short time back, from the Engineer in charge of surveys, Mr. Thorneloe Smith, with regard to the trial survey from Gootchy to Kilkivan; and, in connection with this, he must say that one of the blackest spots in the history of the late Government was that they bunched

all their railways. That was their first serious error—their first step downhill. That was how the Maryborough and Gympie Railway was passed, and he believed there must be a diversion made in that line—a diversion that was very wisely suggested by the present Government when they sat on the Opposition benches. They suggested that the engineer in charge of surveys should inspect the Wide Bay district, and the result of that inspection was the writing of the report to which he referred. He would not take up time by reading the whole of it, but he would point out that in the latter portion Mr. Thorneloe Smith stated that when the railway to Gympie was open, should it be determined to enter upon a scheme for connecting Gayndah with that line by way of Kilkivan, Gootchy was a favourable point from which to start; that by that means mining operations at Kilkivan and Blacksnake, both in copper and gold, would be encouraged and those resources of the district developed; and that it would encourage settlement on the rich grazing and agricultural land in that district; while, at the same time, materials for the construction of the line abounded on either side of the line. That was sufficient to show that a good line of railway, which had every prospect of proving reproductive, had been neglected by the Government, and he hoped that they would not fall into the error of the Douglas Administration and bunch these branch railways. It would be a great misfortune if they persisted in doing so, and he thought the several lines should be taken *seriatim*.

The PREMIER: You can object to any item you like.

Mr. BAYNES said he would move that the words "Brisbane to Sandgate, thirteen miles, at £4,000 per mile, £52,000," be omitted, with the view of inserting "Oxley to South Brisbane, seven miles, at £5,000 per mile." That would save the country £20,000.

HON. MEMBERS: You cannot do that.

Mr. BAYNES said—then he would move that the item for the Sandgate railway be omitted.

The PREMIER said there seemed to be an impression that the Government were bunching these railways; but the announcement had been made before that they were not. They proposed the whole amount, £416,000, but it was competent to any member to move the omission or reduction of any item. To bunch railways was to do the same as was done by the late Government—to bunch them together, and to say that they, as a Ministry, were prepared to stand by the whole of them, and that if any item was omitted by the vote of the House they would withdraw the lot. That was not the intention of the

Government; but it was competent for any member to move that any item be omitted, and submit the question for the decision of the Committee.

Mr. McLEAN said perhaps the hon. gentleman would give some reply to his question respecting a railway to the Logan?

The PREMIER was understood to say that he would give the same explanation that he gave before. In placing this loan on the London market, it was possible that the Treasurer, in asking for one-half or one-third of it, would be required to give a guarantee that he would not ask for the remainder within perhaps eighteen months. He had no intention to give such a guarantee unless it was demanded, and if no guarantee was asked it would be open to the House to pass another loan. The Government did not bind themselves not to borrow next year.

Mr. NORTON said if every hon. member felt that his district was neglected because a railway was not made in some part of it, he thought he had a right to ask the Premier whether he intended to construct a line from Port Curtis to Rockhampton; but he had already put that question to a test in the House, and on that occasion he obtained very little support from either side, and he did not intend to put it again at present. There was one matter, however, which he was perfectly at a loss to apprehend, and that was the principle upon which those hon. members who were so anxious to have a line from Oxley to South Brisbane acted. It would be remembered that when he brought forward his motion with regard to the works in the Fitzroy River, he proposed not to abandon those works altogether, but to suspend them, with the object of testing their capacity for resisting the water, and, in fact, accomplishing the object for which they were built; and if that motion had been carried, it was his intention, later on, to propose that the works be altogether abandoned, with the object of carrying out in their place a railway from Rockhampton or Gracemere to Port Curtis, in order to connect the Central line with the harbour at that place. In bringing that motion forward a very distinct principle was involved—namely, that by carrying out a line of railway from the present Central line to the harbour of Port Curtis an expenditure would be involved which would return a fair amount of interest; but by carrying out the works in the Fitzroy River they would expend almost, if not quite, an equal amount which would give no return whatever, while at the same time the expenditure necessary to maintain the works in the Fitzroy River would be very much greater than the cost of maintaining the railway. Therefore, he proposed to carry out a work which would give a fair amount of interest,

and which in the course of time would pay as good interest as any other line in the colony—in place of carrying out a work which would give no interest whatever. But hon. members who opposed that motion, and who now advocated a railway from Oxley to deep-water, or to South Brisbane, were guilty of great inconsistency, because they had already a railway line running on one side of the river almost to deep-water, and now they proposed to run another on the other side of the river, and the argument they used in opposition to his motion was that it was very much cheaper to carry by water than by rail. The only argument he had heard in favour of the construction of this line was that it would facilitate the carrying of coal which was of such a friable nature that it would not bear being knocked about by being shifted from one vessel to another. He quite admitted that the coal in question was of that friable nature, having lately seen some supplied to the locomotive department at Ipswich, a large quantity of which was reduced almost to powder. He had understood some hon. members who were well acquainted with these matters to say that, as the sinking in these mines became deeper, the coal would become as hard as Newcastle coal—or, at any rate, sufficiently hard to bear a good deal of knocking about. The question, therefore, was whether it was advisable that the Government should incur this expense simply to bring down coal that was now of a friable nature, when in the course of a few years coal would be obtained which would be able to bear a good deal of knocking about. For his own part he did not think it desirable that they should do anything of the kind. And apart from that, when they came to consider the question of the deep-water to which this line should go—whether to South Brisbane or to Bulimba—they must remember that they were even then separated from the sea by a bay the entrance to which was almost entirely blocked up, and, moreover, it was separated from the bay by a river whose mouth was now choked up, and had always been choked up, not merely by mud, but by about £100,000 of Queensland gold—because, not including the cost of the dredge, nearly that amount had been spent in trying to deepen the mouth of the Brisbane River. Although that had been done, it was now proposed to expend over another £100,000 in making a further attempt to open a channel from the bay into the river. Hon. members who had opposed his motion would act inconsistently in supporting this one.

Mr. THORN said that the hon. member's statement with regard to the coal he had seen at Ipswich was not altogether correct, as, although it was the very best for the

use to which it was put at the Ipswich workshops, it was only a sample from one mine, and he could assure the hon. member that there were seams of coal in other mines in the district which were much harder and quite equal to much of the coal in the old country, and to that at Newcastle in New South Wales. He presumed the Committee could make any amendments they chose, as the Ministry did not insist on the Estimates now under consideration being passed as they stood, as they had done with the trunk-line Estimate on which the Premier told them they would stand or fall. With regard to the branch line to South Brisbane, he wanted to know whether the intended motion of the hon. member for Burnett could be put? If it was withdrawn he proposed to move one to a similar effect himself.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that as the Estimates had been sent down by message from the Governor, it was irregular to propose any motion or amendment with a view of altering their character.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was surprised at such opposition being offered to branch railways, inasmuch as hon. members on his side of the House did not care two-pence about the branch lines as they had got all they wanted in the trunk lines. He was himself entirely in favour of all the branch lines, and he would point out to hon. members that there was a way of doing what they wanted. They could not, just now, meddle with the Loan Estimate, but a Supplementary Loan Estimate could be brought up providing for additional branch lines. At present the Opposition were only playing into the hands of the Government by obstructing these branch lines, and if they would take his advice they would let the lot pass.

Mr. THORN said the hon. member was mistaken, as he (Mr. Thorn) was not obstructing branch lines in any way; on the contrary, he wanted to have them all passed. He wished, however, to have a promise given that there would be a supplementary loan for a branch line from Oxley to South Brisbane.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that he might save the hon. gentleman a great deal of trouble by informing him at once that he would not get any promise whatever, as the hon. member had been already told by the Premier. If he wanted to obstruct these lines he could do so, because, as had been stated by the member for Stanley, the supporters of the Government did not care a rap whether the branch lines were made or not, although they felt bound in honour to support the Government in their estimate. He would warn the Opposition that, if they commenced fiddling with these branch lines, they might not get any of them,

Mr. KELLETT said he was surprised to hear what had fallen from the Colonial Secretary. He might state that he should not have given a vote for a single trunk railway had there not been a certain promise given by members on the Government side that all these branch lines should be passed.

Mr. THORN: Log-rolling.

Mr. KELLETT said the hon. member might call it what he liked, and, no doubt, he was well used to log-rolling; but the hon. member was going the right way to have a good many of the branch lines thrown out. For his own part, he should be very sorry to see any one of these branch lines rejected, as he believed they would be of great advantage to the colony. There were many members on his side of the House who did not know the advantage they would be, their hearts being so set on the railways to the outside country that they knew nothing of the requirements of the selectors.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked what the cost of the line to Sandgate would be? He believed, instead of its costing £52,000, it would cost nearer £200,000.

The CHAIRMAN said that as there appeared to be some doubt as to the ruling he had given, he would, with a view to make it as clear as possible, quote what "May" said on the subject—

"In Committee of Supply it is irregular to propose any motion or amendment not relating to a grant under consideration—so a committee may grant or refuse a Supply or may refuse the amount proposed, but have no other functions."

Mr. BAYNES said that, whilst willing to give the Government every support, he took special exception to being dictated to in the manner the Committee had been dictated to by the Colonial Secretary, especially when the Premier was in the House. He considered the hon. gentleman stepped out of his course to dictate in the manner in which he had done.

Mr. THORN said he did not wish to move the Chairman out of the chair with a view of referring the ruling just given to the Speaker, but at the same time he doubted whether the ruling was a correct one. Some of the proposed branch lines would not be a success, whilst they would cost considerably more, if not twice as much, than what was put down for them. The little branch line he proposed would only cost a few thousand pounds, and would save a very large annual expenditure on roads; it had cost the country from £15,000 to £20,000 to keep those roads in repair through their being so cut up by the coal carts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in reply to a question put by the hon. member for Mitchell, said that the Premier, in making his second financial statement, pointed out that the Engineer's estimate of the line

to Sandgate for what he called a first-class line was £6,322 per mile. It must be understood that the Chief Engineer had two different classes of railways—namely, a first and a second class. The Government believed that a line of the first-class character was not required, but that a second-class line—which meant steeper gradients, lighter rolling-stock, and sharper curves—would answer all purposes, and that was estimated to cost £4,000 per mile—that was, taking the line *viâ* the Albion, which was considered to be the best route.

Mr. THORN said he could assure the hon. gentleman that, if the cost of rolling-stock and the purchase of land were included, the cost would amount to considerably more.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS explained that the line, when it left the present railway station, would go through Government property to the Acclimatization Society's grounds, and after that, from all he had heard, the large land proprietors would be quite willing to give what land was required. He could not speak with regard to what the small holders of land would do. He believed the hon. member for Enoggera was able to give information as to the willingness of the large landowners to assist the Government in making the line by giving the land required through their properties.

Mr. WALSH wished it to be understood that he did not oppose the line because it was a Brisbane line, but on commercial grounds only, as he thought that the money would be better spent on a coal-line such as was proposed from Oxley to Brisbane.

Mr. SHEAFFE said he had not understood that because hon. members on his side of the Committee had got the trunk lines passed they were bound to vote for all the branch lines. The hon. member for Stanley (Mr. Kellett) said that if he had not understood that that was the arrangement he should not have voted for the trunk lines; but he (Mr. Sheaffe) was in favour of some of the branch lines but not in favour of others, and, therefore, he should vote against them. He believed, for instance, that the Sandgate line would not pay, and therefore he should vote against it.

Mr. KELLETT said the hon. member had not understood the effect of his (Mr. Kellett's) remarks. What he said was, that the trunk lines and the branch lines were part of one scheme, and that he would not have voted for the trunk lines if he had had any idea that hon. members on his side of the Committee were going to vote against the branch lines.

Mr. McLEAN asked whether the Government had put the Sandgate line on their Estimates on the understanding that the people along the line would give the land?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS explained that he could not answer for some of the small landowners, but he knew as a fact that the large owners of land, of whom there were a great many, would be willing to give their land. The Sandgate line was simply the commencement of a line which would be extended to Caboolture, &c., and the direction decided upon had been with that view.

Mr. BEATTIE said he had been anxious to learn how it was intended to take that line. During the last two or three weeks the Ministry had been deputationized on the subject of a branch line from Oxley to South Brisbane for the purpose of giving facilities to the conveyance of the coal traffic, and, having a knowledge of both routes—namely, that *viâ* Oxley and that from Brisbane to Bulimba—he was in hopes that he should have heard of the intention of the Government to carry a line to deep-water at the last-named place. He believed such a line would not go through any private property until it got to the English Church in the Valley—at least, nothing to speak of, and therefore it would be far cheaper than constructing a line from Oxley. If it was intended to take the line, as suggested to the Royal Commission, to a point in Brisbane, it would be found to be a very unsuitable place for the purposes for which the line was required, and also very costly, but if the line was taken by the line mentioned by the hon. Minister for Works, a loop line could be made to Bulimba Reach, where there was deep water. The Government would not, he believed, have to purchase land there, as the owners of the land, who lived at Maryborough, had already in the most generous way offered to give to the Government what land was necessary for sewerage purposes, and most probably as they were so liberal to the Brisbane people for that object they would be equally so for railway purposes.

Mr. KINGSFORD had nothing to say against the Sandgate line, but he wished to be allowed to say a word in favour of a line from South Brisbane to Oxley.

The CHAIRMAN: I may point out that it is out of order for an hon. member to discuss any other than the item under discussion.

Mr. MESTON opposed the Sandgate line because it was professedly constructed as a line to a watering-place, and Sandgate was no watering-place and never would be. It might be suitable for a few residents of Brisbane to run down to on Saturday and Sunday, but what they wanted was a watering-place of which the colony would be proud. Such a place they had at Southport, and as there would eventually be a line to the Logan, it could be continued to Nerang Creek, only six miles from Southport, whence a tramway to the

Tweed would attract the trade of the border, and avoid the necessity of a dangerous coastal trade.

Question—That the item objected to be omitted—put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 4.

Messrs. Meston, Baynes, Swanwick, and Beor.

NOES, 30.

Messrs. Griffith, Paterson, McLean, Garrick, McIlwraith, Dickson, Perkins, Stevens, Thorn, Cooper, Rutledge, Rea, A. H. Palmer, Norton, Low, Kellett, Kingsford, Stevenson, O'Sullivan, H. W. Palmer, Macrossan, Lalor, Thompson, Persse, Hamilton, Beattie, Archer, Horwitz, Hill, and Mackay.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

Mr. BAYNES said the day would come when the Committee would regret wasting money on pleasure—building a railway that ran to nothing but a mosquito swamp. They had a mine of wealth under their feet. The whole of West Moreton and the greater part of East Moreton and the Darling Downs were a vast coalfield, and the Government were doing nothing to develop it. They appeared jealous lest the colony should have anything to export but wool, and he felt ashamed to be associated with a party who were so jealous of commerce. He objected to these lines being taken *in globo*; it was the black spot on the Ministerial policy, as it was on the railway policy of the late Ministry. He was surprised the Government should ask for £52,000 to go to a pleasure-place to which there was already a road as level as a bowling-green, and which could be reached with a pair of good horses in an hour and a quarter. There was another proposed branch line—Warwick to Killarney, £50,000—a railway right into the howling wilderness. It was contemptible to ask for £50,000 to go where there was a little basin of water, because it was called after one of the most beautiful spots in Ireland: it was trading on a name. There was far better land in the Wide Bay and Burnett district, and he, as a pastoral lessee in a district whose lands had been taken from them under the iniquitous Railway Reserves Act to pay for the Maryborough and Gympie and Bundaberg and Mount Perry lines, protested against having to pay for a pleasure line leading to hon. members' doors.

Mr. KATES said it was a mistake to call the Killarney district a wilderness. There were now hundreds of settlers between that place and Warwick, and wheat-growing was being carried on to a large extent.

Mr. GROOM said that if the line were taken from Warwick to Killarney in a straight line there would be some reason in the observations of the hon. member for Burnett; but if it was to be taken through

the farming districts of Emu Vale, Farm Creek, and Swan Creek, it would tap one of the richest wheat-growing districts in the colony. It would be time enough to discuss whether the line was to be taken to a howling wilderness when the plans and book of reference were submitted for approval. If the hon. member had said the trunk lines were going to a howling wilderness there would have been some sense in the remark; but it was entirely out of place to apply it to the line to Killarney, and of all the farming districts that was perhaps the one which most required assistance to bring produce to market, because the road was made on black soil. With regard to the vote taken just now, he was not in favour of the Sandgate line, and thought the money might very well be devoted to a better purpose; but he had declined to vote upon it after what transpired in Committee last evening and until the members of the Opposition came to a mutual understanding as to the course of action they intended to adopt. In justice to his constituents he desired to say that he distinctly understood that the course of action to be taken by the Opposition was, that the extension of the trunk lines should be opposed *in toto* unless the Government consented that those immediately benefited by them should pay the interest on their cost of construction. He was sorry that that understanding had been departed from; but, if one mistake had been made, that was no reason for making another, and the party ought to come to a distinct understanding as to its course of action. As one item had been allowed to pass they all ought to be allowed to pass, and he did not intend to offer the slightest opposition to any item on the Loan Estimates. The Government would pass them on their own responsibility, and the country would pass judgment upon them.

Mr. KING said he wished to call the attention of the Minister for Works to a fact in connection with country railways which had been brought under his notice lately in some of the English papers. The Italian Government had recently opened some railways in the flat country along the Po. These railways ran on the middle of the ordinary road. The engines were twelve tons in weight, and there were no stations. The trains were simply steam omnibuses and freight cars, and they took up passengers and freight alongside the road whenever offered. The lines ran upon the natural gradients of the roads. He believed the road from Warwick to Killarney was tolerably flat, and if it was possible to try there an experiment of this kind he hoped the Minister for Works would do so. If railways could be made and worked in that way a saving might be made of nearly half the expense usually entailed.

Mr. HORWITZ said, if the line from Warwick to Killarney was to be taken in a straight line, he should oppose it, as it ought to be taken through the farming districts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was impossible to say which way the line would go until the surveys were made, but the hon. member would have full information when plans were laid on the table of the House. With reference to the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. King), he had no power at present to make railways along the roads. A Bill dealing with the subject was now before the House, and if it were passed he hoped to have an opportunity of making a railway of the kind indicated.

Mr. MORRHEAD asked whether the sum asked was likely to be enough, or whether they were asked to vote so much to be chucked into the fire?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the sum asked for would be sufficient to make at least twenty-five miles of railway.

Mr. MILES said the hon. member for the Burnett should have delivered his speech when the trunk lines were under consideration. If the line from Warwick to Killarney were taken in a straight line it would be no benefit, but if it went through the agricultural districts it would pay better than any other branch lines named on the Estimates, and would not only be self-supporting, but might help to recoup the country to some extent for losses over other branch lines.

Mr. PERSSE said he believed such lines as were referred to by the hon. member (Mr. King) would be suitable for farming districts, and might be made at a great saving to the colony on the present cost of construction. He regretted that the Premier did not place on the Estimates a line from the Upper Logan, which would be far more profitable than either the Killarney or the Sandgate line. Such a line might not bring so much to the revenue from passenger traffic, but it would be the means of settling a larger population. The Logan district was the oldest settled district, with the exception of the Darling Downs, in the colony, and was entitled to consideration. Thirty years ago wheat was grown there and sent into Brisbane, and when Captain Wickham was short of wheat he sent into the Logan for it. Why the district should have been ignored he did not know. Better lucerne was grown there than on the Darling Downs; the seasons were more regular, and the population had been longer established. A larger revenue was derived from the Logan from sale of land and annual rents than from any other part of the colony, Ipswich alone excepted. About sixteen years ago land was alienated there under the coffee and sugar regulations, and the increase of population each year showed it to be far in advance of other

districts. No doubt the Premier had selected the branch lines which he considered to be most beneficial, but he (Mr. Persse) trusted he would see his way to propose a line from some point between South Brisbane and Goodna to the Upper Logan. Very scant justice had been done to Brisbane, considering the large amount of agricultural land around it, in only giving it one paltry twelve-mile railway to Sandgate. In justice to the capital another line should have been made to enable people to take up and cultivate something like half-a-million acres of vacant land in the vicinity of Brisbane. The objection made to the carrying of a line to the Tweed had been that the settlers there had water-carriage; but the line he proposed would tap the Logan district where the inhabitants had no means of getting their produce to market. It had been very truly remarked that in black-soil country it was cheaper to make railways than roads. Roads in such districts were always requiring repairs—they never gave satisfaction, and in the end it was found that it would have been far cheaper to have constructed a railway in the first instance. He trusted the Premier would take this matter into consideration, and make a line which would benefit a large community occupying land second to none in the colony.

Mr. BAYNES said he trusted no influence would be brought to bear on the Government to induce them to construct any more log-rolling lines; if the Government allowed it they would not occupy their present position next year. The hon. member for Cook might think he would get a line from Cooktown to somewhere in the wilderness; but he (Mr. Baynes) should not be a party to it, nor would he act like a voting machine in the House. If the £52,000 were knocked off, as he proposed, there would still remain £3,000,000; and that sum might be well spent in a proper and reproductive way without £52,000 being thrown away for pleasure purposes.

Mr. WALSH said he was sorry that a gentleman possessing sound judgment and common-sense should utter such nonsense. He (Mr. Walsh) had advocated a line not to the wilderness, but to a town where there were two banks, several merchants, and a prosperous community. If every hon. member voted against every work of which he had no personal knowledge he would vote against the best lines in the colony. He was sure the hon. member would be one of the strongest supporters of a line from Cooktown to Maytown if he heard the facts that could be laid before him.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was satisfied railways could be made for £2,500 per mile; but as a new system of construction was being inaugurated, the Committee were entitled to some information as to the changes that were to be made. The latest infor-

mation in the possession of the Committee was contained in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, in which the minimum sum was put down at £3,500 per mile. The hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. King) had alluded to a new kind of railway which was being adopted in Italy, but none of the lines now proposed, except the Burrum, passed through similar country to that referred to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said these branch lines would, of course, be made on a different system to the one hitherto followed. The rails, in the first place, would be much lighter; 30-lb. rails to the yard would be used instead of 41½-lb. as at present, and that would make a considerable difference in the cost per mile. The other ironwork for the permanent-way would be equally cheap and lighter in proportion to the rails, and the expensive stations that they had been in the habit of building would be dispensed with to a great extent. They would have inexpensive stations, and, where they could adopt them with advantage, steeper grades and sharper curves. By making the lines, also, along the main roads wherever they could the estimate of £2,500 would not be reached. He did not think they had any land in the settled districts suitable for the description of railway mentioned by the Speaker. He had a statement of the cost of rails, sleepers, ballast, and laying the permanent-way which he would read to the Committee. The ironwork for permanent-way would come to £420 per mile; sleepers, £396; ballast, £196; laying permanent-way, £396—total, £1,408 per mile, leaving a pretty large margin for the slight outlay required, having steeper grades, sharper curves, and less expensive stations.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what the speed would be?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the speed would be somewhere about ten or twelve miles an hour. It would be possible to run faster, but he did not know that there was any necessity for doing so. What agriculturists wanted was certainty and cheapness.

In reply to Mr. GRIFFITH,

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was every probability of the plans for the Fassifern and Sandgate lines being laid on the table soon. The plans for half the distance of the Fassifern line were ready now, and for the other half they would be completed in four or five weeks. The plans for the Sandgate line could be ready in a short time. It was intended to lay them on the table this session. He had not yet made up his mind as to the direction of the Highfields line. It would probably start from a point at the Gowrie Junction, going through Meringandan, and much better and easier country than if it were taken along the Main Range. If it

were to follow the top of the Main Range it could not be made for the sum named in the Estimates. The gauge for the branch railways would be the same as for the main lines—3 feet 6 inches.

Mr. DICKSON said he had already stated that if the Government intended to proceed as expeditiously as they could with the various services on the Estimates, the Treasurer would require another loan before the end of three years. In placing the loan, did the Treasurer intend to give any promise to the English capitalists that he would not apply for a certain period for another loan?

The PREMIER said the question had already been asked and answered. Unless he was forced to do it he would not give such a promise; he would not volunteer it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in reply to the hon. member for the Burnett, said he could give no further information regarding the Burrum line than was given a few weeks ago. He believed Mr. Hurley had advertised his intention to ask authority of Parliament to construct the line.

Mr. PERSSE asked what would become of the vote if Mr. Hurley's offer was accepted? Would the Premier devote it to the extension of some of the branch lines, or give it to some other district for a branch railway?

The PREMIER was understood to say that the vote would lapse, or probably go towards meeting the depreciation in debentures.

Mr. KING said he was informed that Mr. Hurley had received every encouragement to go on with his Bill, and that he might be expected in Brisbane in a few days; when he did come they should know for certain whether he intended to proceed with his scheme or not.

Question—That £416,000 be granted for branch lines—put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that £249,000 be granted for Harbours and Rivers.

Mr. THORN said they were now coming to the objectionable items. He wished to ask the Premier whether he intended to impose some rate or tax upon the people who would benefit by the deepening of harbours and rivers. He might tell the hon. gentleman that one great reason why their loans did not bring better prices was because they had not gone in sufficiently for reproductive works. If the English capitalists were to find out that they were again going to borrow money for harbours and rivers, roads and bridges, great difficulty would be experienced in getting money at a fair price to the colony. Recurring to the question of taxation, the commercial community benefited chiefly by the improvement of harbours and rivers, and why should they not bear the chief part of the interest upon the expenditure? There should be some system established

by which those who were benefited by public works should pay the interest upon the expenditure. Every river on the coast from Cape Moreton to the far north was in this Estimate; and he should like some information respecting the improvements the Government proposed to carry out. He could assure them that the proposed expenditure on Ross' Creek would be simply money thrown away; and the works already commenced there should be carried to completion. The amount put down for the Logan River was useless expenditure, because before long he hoped to see a railway to that district, and this money would actually be spent to bring the river into competition with the railway. The Burnett River, he admitted, required improvement; and with regard to the Pioneer, those who would be benefited by the expenditure of the £30,000 put down for that port should pay something towards the interest. The Bowen Jetty, also, required some expenditure, but all such works should come out of revenue and not out of loan. He hoped the Committee would unanimously reject the whole of the items that were for unproductive works.

Mr. WALSH said, with reference to the amount on the Estimates for his district, his constituents did not want it at the expense of the country. They did not go on the begging system at all, but were prepared to pay for the money they received. With respect to the improvements in the Endeavour River, he could state that large steamers had to lighter outside the jetty at great risk and inconvenience, and that when the contemplated improvements were made they would be able to discharge cargo alongside.

Mr. McLEAN would like some information as to how the Government intended to expend the £1,000 set down for the Logan River. He knew it could be profitably expended there, but he should like to know what the Government proposed to do?

Mr. NORRIS was understood to advocate the establishment of harbour and river trusts, which would levy imposts on the goods passing through each particular harbour. It was not fair that the whole colony should be taxed to provide the interest upon works of this kind, which only benefited particular districts. Another effect of establishing such trusts would be that money would be more economically expended, and, as soon as it was known that each district benefited by public expenditure would have to provide a certain sum in proportion with what they received, the number of applications for money would be considerably reduced.

Mr. THORN was glad to hear the hon. member for Cook say his constituency was prepared to pay 5 per cent. on the £10,000 for the Endeavour River; but he could assure that hon. member that that amount

would be perfectly useless. It would take £100,000 to make a deep channel up to Cooktown to enable mail steamers to go to the wharf.

Mr. WALSH said the hon. member knew nothing at all about the place when he made such a statement. Was he aware that the shallow water did not extend more than 50 to 100 yards from one end to the other? The present jetty, which was built in a great hurry, did not extend far enough—it did not go into the deepest water, and at present vessels going to the wharves lay on the solid rocks and were sometimes injured. As he said before, his district was not anxious to get money without paying interest for it. The best proof of their *bona fides* was that they did not want money at the public expense, but were prepared to pay for it; and he hoped that rule would be made general. It was a great injustice that Cooktown should have to pay for the deepening of the Brisbane and Fitzroy Rivers, and those who had improvements made in their harbours should pay the interest on the expenditure.

Mr. AMHURST agreed with the last speaker; but what the Government proposed to do was, to place the northern parts of the colony on the same footing as the others by giving them a fair proportion of the expenditure; and then, on the principle of the Divisional Boards Bill, the interest on whatever else was expended would have to be provided by the district. When his constituents were put on the same footing as other parts of the colony, they would agree to pay interest on the money spent upon their public works. At present, on the port of Brisbane, £87,000 had been spent; £110,000 more was required to complete the works, and £53,000 was placed on these Estimates. At Rockhampton £35,000 had been spent, £67,000 more was required, and on the Estimates they found £37,000. Several of the rivers mentioned had received no expenditure up to the present, and he maintained that the vote did fair justice to all parts of the colony. He was sure the late Treasurer, who had visited his (Mr. Amhurst's) constituency when in office and initiated the proposed improvements, believed in the vote, and that all he now wanted was information, which he (Mr. Amhurst) would be happy to give him.

The PREMIER said that the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn) had suggested that the vote should be placed under the control of harbour and river trusts, who should have power to tax persons benefited by the improvements; but if there was any vote which might be called a general vote, by which the whole of the colony was benefited, it was the vote now under consideration. There was something worthy of consideration in the proposition to initiate a system of harbour trusts, but the

objection to it was, to his mind, a very plain one. Whenever they talked of starting trusts there was one thing that would have to be considered—namely, that the Government would first of all have to find the money to start with, and therefore it would resolve itself into this—that the general Government would have to hand over moneys to be spent by harbours and rivers trusts. If that was not done the result would be that no work would be done at all. There was one exception, and that was the Endeavour River. That was the only harbour that he knew which had actually paid the whole of the expenditure on it; and he believed that the amount received from harbour dues and wharfage rates would have built the wharves there. The arguments against the establishment of harbour trusts applied more particularly to the city of Brisbane. Had such a system been initiated before the wharves became private property it would have been different; but the Government could not possibly get possession of these wharves without purchasing them, and surely the hon. member for Northern Downs would not propose that. Sometime ago a deputation from the Chamber of Commerce waited upon him with the view of obtaining the consent of the Government to the establishment of a harbour trust to which should be given the power of borrowing money from the Government in order to carry out works that might be required, and he believed there was some scheme by which it should be endowed. It was true that in Brisbane and Rockhampton the system of harbour trusts could be carried out, but they would be perfectly useless without funds, and he believed that it would be far better, so long as the Government had to find the money, that they should have the expenditure of it. He believed that harbour trusts would be able to spend the money more economically when it was raised by themselves; but so long as it was money voted by the general Government, it was better that the Government should have the expenditure of it. He had already explained how the money proposed for the improvement of the Brisbane River and the purchase of new dredge plant was to be expended. With regard to £10,000 put down for the Logan River, that was to clear away shallows and make it available for navigation. With respect to the sum of £37,000 for the Fitzroy River, that was only half the money that would be required to meet the scheme of improvement before the House. He had explained on a previous occasion what was required for the Burnett River, and also for the Mary River. With regard to the Pioneer River, for which £30,000 was put down, there were no plans prepared to that extent at the present time. The plans proposed by Mr. Nisbet would

involve an expenditure of £80,000; but the Government did not see their way to go into such an extensive scheme as that. For Ross' Creek the sum of £5,000 was put down, and he believed that that money was required and would be well expended. Then there was £10,000 for the Bowen Jetty which was going to decay owing to the woodwork being eaten away by cobra, and that sum would go towards renewing it. The £10,000 put down for Port Douglas Jetty was for the purpose of making a stone jetty, and he was advised that amount would be required; at the same time, he considered the improvements going on in that place justified the expenditure. And then there was the general vote for clearing rivers, &c.

Mr. DICKSON said he quite agreed with the Treasurer in his views concerning harbour trusts. At the present state of the progress of the colony he considered it would be premature to hand over to local bodies moneys for harbour improvements, which could be better spent by the Central Government. When he was a member of the late Government applications were made to him to carry out certain works in the Brisbane River, and to allow a trust to have the control of all moneys raised for such purposes, and to take charge of the improvements; but he thought the colony was too young to hand over such a power. Still, they must look ahead and make provision for the time when it might be desirable, with the growing importance of their ports, to have them maintained by harbour trusts, and therefore he thought the Government should very jealously conserve any water frontages they might have with a view to retain them for the endowment of any trusts that might hereafter be created. There was a great deal of harbour work to be accomplished, and he did not think that such work, under the good professional advice they now had, was at all likely to be thrown away. Seeing the natural advantages the colony possessed in its large number of good ports, it was proper policy to have them improved to their fullest extent as speedily as could be done. Therefore, whilst he agreed with the Treasurer that at the present time none of the harbours were ripe for harbour trusts—not even Brisbane and Rockhampton, which he considered were most fit—he thought that any improvements that were necessary would be far better and more economically conducted by the central Government, and that it would be better for the Treasurer, for some time to come, to discountenance any applications of this sort, and, at the same time, as he had already observed, to watch most jealously the conservation of all water frontages so that they might in due time be handed over to trusts as endowments. He took it that the first

duty of the Government was to make improvements in the harbours, and when the proper time arrived to hand them over to trusts for maintenance, whose duty it should be to keep the rivers and harbours clear of obstructions and to see that the improvements already made were not allowed to fall into decay. He was glad to see that suitable provision was made for the improvements of the various harbours and rivers mentioned in the Estimate, but at the same time he trusted the Treasurer would give a promise to the Committee that before any money was expended the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers would study the requirements of each place separately, and that he should not be guided simply by a desire to spend money because it had been voted. No one could arrive at a conception of what amount was necessary, except those who had made such works their particular study. The removal of obstructions in rivers was always attended with a great deal of expense, much larger than a person not having special knowledge connected with that particular branch of engineering would be able to decide, and therefore he should have been better pleased if the hon. Treasurer had been able to give the Committee more specific information on the vote. The improvements in the Brisbane and Fitzroy Rivers were being conducted on a regular system, and there could be no objection to vote money for a continuation of those improvements which had been commenced years ago. But, with regard to the votes for the Logan, the Burnett, and the Endeavour rivers, he should have liked the hon. Treasurer to have been in a position to say that the improvements contemplated had been specifically considered by the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, and that he was satisfied that the amounts put down were sufficient. With respect to the Pioneer River, he quite agreed with the hon. member for Mackay that something should be done for the improvement of that port. But they should take a lesson from the past, and remember that a large amount of money had been lost there by commencing works without having any proper principle to go upon. He had no fear of anything of the sort being done by the present Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, who was likely to carry out whatever he advocated to a satisfactory conclusion. If this £30,000 were only portion of a scheme it would not be sufficient to effect the permanent improvements of the river; it might possibly land the colony in an expenditure of £90,000 or £100,000, and, if so, it was their duty to remonstrate with the Government against it. While in office he gave a large amount of attention to the improvement of the Pioneer River, and, had Mr. Nisbet been able to submit a feasible scheme of river improvements for a reason-

able amount of money, the last Loan Estimate would have contained an item sufficient for the purpose. He could not learn from the Government even now that, up to the present time, the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers had furnished the department with necessary information. He objected to the Treasurer sanctioning the purchase of the water-frontage allotments at Mackay, which had been eroded by the action of the tide, and which there was a strong desire in Mackay to get the Government to purchase at a price considerably in excess of their fair value. He trusted the Colonial Treasurer would not allow himself to be led into any scheme of that sort; but if he could see his way to improve or preserve the banks of the Pioneer River, and permanently improve the navigation of the port, giving the shipping accommodation which was required on account of the large export trade, he saw no objection to this loan. But it was of an indefinite character, and he hoped the Treasurer, before he spent a penny upon the scheme, would see that it was not the commencement only of a plan which would lead to a very large expenditure, and which might be as unproductive in the future as previous expenditure at that port had been in the past. No doubt increased shipping facilities were also wanted at Port Douglas, but when it involved a question of stonework for jetties and breakwaters, the expense was not to be counted by less than tens of thousands—and great caution was necessary. While he admitted the importance of Port Douglas, and trusted its prosperity was assured, he thought the Treasurer would be only justified in weighing well the merits of the case and seeing that he was not committing the country to an expenditure which would not complete the work satisfactorily, and which would not be warranted by the trade of the port. He had not a word to say against the £10,000 for Cooktown. The wharves required enlargement, and he trusted the trade of the port would so increase that additional wharves, which had proved a good speculation in the past, would be necessary. He trusted the Treasurer would not, however, hand over that very valuable wharfage to the municipality, but reserve it for some future time, when a harbour trust would be as necessary there as in other ports.

Mr. THORN said the items under discussion should be provided out of general revenue. It was not an opportune time to go into the market to borrow money for works not of a reproductive character. The Treasurer ought to be glad if any one would reduce the amount he proposed to borrow.

The PREMIER said that, as they had already passed £2,200,000 of the Loan Estimates, it was ridiculous to take up the

time of the Committee now as to whether it was a good time to borrow money or not. As to the questions put by the hon. member for Enoggera, they had come to the conclusion that for the Pioneer River a sum of £30,000 would be sufficient, and it would not be the commencement of an £80,000 or £90,000 scheme—they had no idea of doing that. The £30,000 would be ample to complete a scheme which would greatly improve the port, the whole of the plans would be made out under the direction of Mr. Nisbet, and the work would be left entirely to his direction.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved £62,650 for Roads and Bridges.

Mr. THORN noticed an amount for water storage, main roads, £30,000. This item he objected to, as it was not fair that people in the outside districts should get their water supply for next to nothing, when the people in the municipalities had to pay sometimes as much as 10 per cent. He also objected to the item of £20,000 for main roads to goldfields, as it was favouring one mining industry in particular and ignoring others. In addition to that, the gold-miners were to have their roads made at the public expense, whereas the farmers were taxed to make theirs. Under the Divisional Boards Bill, also, the gold-miners got off scot-free. If there was one class who ought to pay for their roads more than another it was the gold-miners, who were better able to bear the strain of taxation than the farmers.

Mr. MILES asked where the money for water storage on the main roads was to be expended? He also objected to several other items proposed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that the money would be expended wherever it was required over the whole of the main roads of the colony. Hardly a week passed without his receiving some application to sink a well or make a dam on some part of the Darling Downs, and the hon. member had himself sanctioned a good many in that and other districts; and he ought also to know that men could not travel in some parts of the colony unless care was taken to store water there.

Mr. THORN said it was the custom in other colonies, on asking for votes of this kind, to submit a schedule showing where it was intended to expend the money. How did the Minister for Works propose to allocate the £20,000 for roads to goldfields? Was it all to be given to one goldfield, or to be divided amongst several?—and, if so, in what proportion?

Mr. MILES said that while at the Works Office he had never authorised the expenditure of any money except for the purpose for which it was voted. He was under the impression that this £30,000 for water-storage was going to be expended towards the

"setting sun"—where the pastoral lessees had already taken up large tracts of pretended waterless country at one-sixteenth of a penny per acre. There was another item—£9,000 for the completion of the Fitzroy Bridge—on which he should like to have some information. The plans of that bridge were prepared and the estimates furnished by Mr. Byerley. How was it that after the expenditure of the £40,000 or so which it was estimated by Mr. Byerley to cost there was still £9,000 wanted to complete it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said all he knew was that £38,000 had been voted for the bridge and that £9,000 more was required to complete it, the original vote having been found insufficient.

Mr. MILES asked what was the opinion of the Minister for Works of an officer in his department who could not send in a correct estimate for a bridge within £9,000? Surely such an officer ought to have his "walking ticket" given to him without delay.

Mr. WALSH said he was not surprised to find Mr. Byerley asking for an extra £9,000 to complete a work for which he had sent in plans and estimates. There was a bridge at Townsville, also planned and built by that officer, and which had cost between £3,000 and £4,000, which was so badly built and had become such a nuisance that it would have to be removed immediately. He agreed that the sooner the country got rid of Mr. Byerley the better; it would be a saving to the colony to give him £2,000 a-year to go and live in Tasmania or elsewhere. The Townsville bridge was a disgrace to everybody connected with it, and it would never be used. It was said that this bridge over the Fitzroy would also be a failure. How could the Government effect a policy of retrenchment while they kept such an unprofitable servant? The northern works ought to have been given to Mr. McMillan, who was on the spot, and who was an engineer by profession.

Mr. BAYNES rose to a point of order. Were the Committee discussing the merits of the Government engineers, or the vote for roads and bridges?

The CHAIRMAN ruled that the hon. member (Mr. Walsh) was not out of order.

Mr. WALSH said that in the interests of the colony he protested against money being wasted in this fashion. Officers who committed the colony to a large expenditure on account of their inability ought to be dismissed.

Mr. REA said that from all he had heard Mr. Byerley was an admirable officer as a surveyor, which was his original occupation here; but when he undertook works of engineering, for which he had no qualifications, the universal verdict upon him was similar to that of the hon. members for Darling Downs and Cook.

Mr. ARCHER said if every officer who had exceeded his estimate were to be dismissed there would be none left. Mr. Byerley was a personal friend of his, but that would not prevent him from speaking what was true. Had Mr. Byerley supervised the work from the first, he would have finished it without exceeding the estimate by so large an amount; but he had been unfortunate in getting incompetent people at first, and had been put to great expense in removing some obstructions when he took charge himself. Other works executed by the same gentleman had given great satisfaction, and there was not a more conscientious officer in the Service. Hon. members would remember that in nearly every instance the first estimates for large public works had been exceeded.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said a large portion of the amount would be recouped to the Government, as plant and material to the value of between £3,000 and £4,000 would remain to be sold or made use of elsewhere.

Mr. KING said that a portion of the amount required in excess of the estimate might be accounted for, and perhaps the hon. member for Northern Downs was himself answerable for it. When tenders were called for the cylinders, a Maryborough and a Sydney firm tendered. The Sydney tender was 30s. per ton lower than the other, and from motives of economy it was accepted. The cylinders were cast in sections 8 feet in diameter and about 6 feet high, and great difficulty was experienced in getting them shipped from Sydney. Mr. Byerley had to go to Sydney three or four times about the matter, and at last a sailing vessel was chartered and the cylinders were shipped, filled with coal from Newcastle which was sold at Rockhampton. Some £1,000 or £1,500 must have been wasted in this attempt to carry those unwieldy cylinders to Rockhampton, when the Maryborough foundries had offered to deliver them for a sum which would have amounted to very much less.

Mr. BEOR said Mr. Byerley was as painstaking, zealous, hardworking, and conscientious a public servant as any in the Service; and the hon. member (Mr. Miles) did not show any spirit of fairness in rushing to the conclusion that he ought to be dismissed without making any inquiries into the circumstances of the case. With regard to the Townsville bridge, nothing had been adduced to show that any fault rested with Mr. Byerley.

Mr. THORN said that in the case of the cylinders there was no fault on the part of himself or Mr. Byerley. If the Maryborough tender had been accepted the same difficulty would have arisen as to shipment. One of the reasons why the Sydney tender was accepted was that it was supposed that freight from there would have been cheaper.

Mr. Byerley had always worked to his satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of the country. Mr. Byerley took upon himself to construct the bridge for £38,000 or £39,000, and no doubt would have done so if unforeseen difficulties had not arisen.

Mr. MOREHEAD said this was hardly fair upon an officer who, during a long and varied career, had done his duty faithfully and well. Admitting that he had greatly over-estimated the cost of this bridge, was he, therefore, to be dismissed, as suggested? If that course were taken in the case of every officer it would be like going back to the time of the French Revolution, when the guillotine was sent with the army to chop off the general's head if he were defeated. He believed Mr. Byerley would come out of this with all honour, and finish the work. It was most improper that he should be treated as he had been, because an ex-Minister who fancied himself a shining light in every capacity in which he had served the Ministry could not understand him. The hon. member had a bitter tongue, and when he made a mistake he never forgave the man about whom he committed the mistake.

Mr. STEVENSON said it ought to have been pointed out that Mr. Byerley had a good deal to contend with, not only as regards the freight of the cylinders, but in the first engineer selected being incompetent. He would also remind the hon. member (Mr. Miles) that when he thought the bridge could not be completed except at an amount greatly in excess of the estimate, he sent Mr. Byerley up there for the purpose of ruining his reputation. The hon. member made that statement to the House. Could he point to a single bridge of the same size which had been completed at the original estimate? He believed no man worked harder than Mr. Byerley to make the work a success, and that if he completed it at anything like £10,000 over the estimate it would be a cheap work and a credit to the colony and himself.

Mr. WALSH said he had no knowledge of Mr. Byerley, and any opinions that he had expressed regarding the Townsville bridge were therefore more impartial than the opinions of those who knew the gentleman as a friend.

Mr. AMHURST said a great deal of prejudice existed against Mr. Byerley. He built the Pioneer bridge, which had stood several heavy floods, despite the predictions of people that it would be carried away by the first.

Mr. BEOR thought the hon. member for Northern Downs might have done Mr. Byerley the justice to mention that his estimates were based upon English prices, and that, through it being insisted upon that the goods should be obtained in the colony, a difference of £1,500 had been caused,

Mr. THORN said he did not know whether Mr. Byerley based his estimates on the English or colonial prices, but rather thought it was on the latter. He did not look upon it as Mr. Byerley's fault that the estimate would be exceeded.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said if the member for Northern Downs would draw on his recollection as well as he did in other cases he would know that Mr. Byerley's estimate was based on the English prices, and that he was not allowed to go to England, but was ordered to get the material in the colony. He had also said that Mr. Byerley accepted the lowest tender, but it was not Mr. Byerley who accepted the tender, but the Minister for Works. Last year the member for Darling Downs said he had ordered Mr. Byerley to take charge of the work personally in order to ruin him. He knew as well as he (Mr. Palmer) that at that time a very large portion of the £37,000 had been expended and a great portion thrown away, owing to the incompetency of the engineer who spent his time in a state of drunkenness. The Minister at the head of the department ought to have known this—he (Mr. Palmer) heard about it—and dismissed the man. Then Mr. Byerley, who was annually abused in the House—for what reason he did not know, for a better and more hard-working servant there was not in the colony—was sent for the purpose of being ruined. The hon. member told the House that if Mr. Byerley did not complete the bridge within his estimate he would have to go, if he was in office at the time. But the hon. gentleman was not in office, and he (Mr. Palmer) sincerely hoped he would never be. He had no doubt the hon. member meant to injure Mr. Byerley, but it was the best day's work he had done for him in sending him to Rockhampton. Notwithstanding the enormous waste of money—it cost as much to dig out foundations as to get the cylinders down in some instances—the bridge would be completed within £3,000 or £4,000 of the estimate. A great deal of plant was also taken from the Oxley bridge and charged at a heavy price against the Fitzroy one. All this should have been stated when the hon. member accused a Civil Servant who had no opportunity of defending himself.

Mr. THORN said that not having the papers he could not state whether the estimates were based on English or colonial prices. He (Mr. Thorn) favoured the colonies generally, and wished the Colonial Secretary would do the same, even if the cost was a little bit higher. Mr. Byerley deserved great praise for the Fitzroy bridge. He had been most anxious to complete the bridge within the amount, and it was not his fault he could not do so.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN believed Mr. Byerley was a good officer, but what astonished

him was that the real question had been missed. It had not been stated what Mr. Byerley's profession was. If he was an engineer he would certainly prefer him to Mr. McMillan, who, when he had charge of the Northern division, put down only £250 for the roads in the Burke district, although he had not been in it for four years, and forgot to mention it would cost £1,000 to send a gang of men to spend the money. With reference to the Townsville bridge, he had received an able letter from a Northern resident informing him that two old punts joined together, and ferried by a black gin or blackfellow, would do the traffic over the creek for the next twenty years, that the bridge was not wanted, and that in any case it was in the wrong place. It had been stated that all estimates for public works in this colony had been exceeded; but two blacks did not make a white, and he held that engineers who calculated the cost of works should be kept pretty close to their estimates, and a license should not be given them to exceed their estimates. But he blamed the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn) for the whole of it, because he admitted that he gave Mr. Byerley *carte blanche* to do almost as he liked. No doubt great extravagance had been allowed in the past, and he was positive that half the money borrowed for the colony had been grossly wasted.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had taken up Mr. Byerley's case, not because he was a personal friend, but because he thought great injustice had been attempted to be done to a very meritorious Civil Servant of this colony, who did his work thoroughly and well. They had now young engineers coming forward with any number of letters to their names, and they found the most egregious errors committed by them; but they found nothing of the kind with regard to Mr. Byerley. It was most unfair that they should be asked to condemn an old grey-headed servant of the State, simply to carry out the venomous spleen which the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles) was so fond of spitting out in that House.

Mr. BAYNES related how an ironfounder in Sydney was led by overtures made by Mr. Byerley to enter into a contract for the Queensland Government by which he lost about £500, and expressed his intention to ask the present Government to place a sum on the Supplementary Estimates to pay that amount in order to keep up the honour of the colony.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member for Stanley had condemned Mr. McMillan because on one occasion he had put down only £250 for roads in the Burke district, but he (Mr. Stevenson) thought that officer showed his good sense in putting down that amount, because in that district, as in the Barcoo and Thompson, they required very

little money expended on roads. A bridge here and there over creeks was all they required in that way, but there were other things—such as more frequent mail communication—that they did require. With regard to the statement that Mr. Byerley had engaged an incompetent engineer, he could say that the moment Mr. Byerley was informed that that officer was misconducting himself he took steps to have him dismissed.

Mr. WALSH said if all the officers of the department were like Mr. McMillan the present discussion would be quite unnecessary.

Mr. MILES said that when an engineer made an estimate which was afterwards exceeded by one-fourth of the original amount it was not unreasonable to ask for some information, and that was all he had done. Finding that there was great waste of public money going on in connection with the work referred to, he instructed Mr. Byerley—as it was his own design and estimate—to go and see the work carried out himself. The worst charge of all that had been brought against him was that he had sent up Mr. Byerley to carry out his own designs in order to ruin him; but that gentleman had the selection of his own officers, and had full authority for employing them, and therefore he (Mr. Miles) could not see why he should be blamed because Mr. Byerley employed a drunken engineer. He believed it would be for the benefit of the colony if Mr. Byerley had a pension of a thousand a year, to get rid of him, and he would say, without fear of contradiction, that that gentleman had wasted more public money than all the other officers in the Service put together. Mr. Byerley had been the most fortunate officer that had ever entered the Public Service of Queensland.

After further discussion,

Mr. MILES moved that the item be reduced by £20,000.

Mr. HENDREN said that no mention was made of roads or bridges for the West Moreton district, although it had the largest population and contributed the largest revenue to the colony. He did not expect to have the estimate amended, but he hoped that a sum would be placed on Supplementary Loan Vote for that district.

Question—That the sum of £30,000 be reduced by £20,000—put and negatived.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he had understood from the Minister for Works that, although £9,000 was put down for completing the Fitzroy bridge, that sum would not all be spent, as it was expected that the plant when sold would realize about £3,000. If that was the case they would simply be borrowing £3,000 for the purpose of paying it into the general revenue.

The PREMIER pointed out that the work must be completed before the plant could be sold. Possibly the plant might not be sold.

In reply to a question from Mr. GRIFFITH,

Mr. WALSH said that the Endeavour River bridge would be five or six miles above Cooktown, and would effect a great saving of distance to the goldfields.

Mr. THORN objected to the whole vote. The amount for the Fitzroy bridge should come out of general revenue. The fact was that these estimates were the most "squared" he had ever seen, and had they been brought down by his side of the House they would have been howled against for the next twelve months. He had never set his eyes on such bribery before.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was ridiculous for the hon. member to talk like that; he had spoken against them all, yet had voted for every item.

Mr. BAYNES said that the present Government had not even done as much for his district as the last Government had, and he could not sit behind them and be told he had been "squared" when that was the case.

Mr. HENDREN expressed himself as favourable to the item for water storage, having in remembrance the experiences of the last drought.

Mr. GRIMES asked the Premier if he intended to push the Divisional Boards Bill through this session?

The PREMIER replied that he did intend to push it through.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked whether any estimate had been made of the cost of the Endeavour bridge?

Mr. WALSH said that he did not know whether the Minister for Works had any estimate or not, but the local road inspector had told him (Mr. Walsh) that £2,000 would be quite sufficient. The river was narrow.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved £300,000, Road Boards and Shire Councils, and Loans to Local Bodies.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked how the sum of £100,000 to meet the first expenditure of road boards and shire councils was to be appropriated? Was the money simply to be handed to Government to spend as they liked, and where they liked? They had heard a good deal earlier in the session of political road-parties, but imagine what would be the effect of Government having the power to distribute this £100,000 on the eve of a general election. No Government should be entrusted with such a power as that.

The PREMIER said it was considered that it would not be right to charge the local bodies with this money to meet their first year's expenditure, and this money was really a gift. It would be sometime before they could raise the revenue from rates, and until they did so this money

would be granted to the various road boards of the colony, Government having the power to allot it.

Mr. THORN objected to the principle of borrowing money for such purposes as these, when the Ministers of the day had the power to make ducks and drakes of it. The sum of £100,000 had better be struck out.

Mr. McLEAN had no doubt the leader of the Government would be prepared with the information the leader of the Opposition asked for when the Divisional Boards Bill came on, but it would not satisfy his side of the House that this £100,000 should be solely in the power of the Government to distribute as they liked. There should be some machinery by which it was to be allocated, and it was absolutely necessary, if the Bill went into committee, the Premier should give some explanation of the probable allocation of the money.

Mr. GRIFFITH had heard in previous years the strongest denunciations of the system of borrowing money for the construction of roads by the Opposition of the day. If Government were to take up the ground that they would not make a proposition of which it was known they did not approve they would strengthen their position very much. It was a bad principle, and on that both sides of the House were agreed. Why, then, should they vote for it? He had formed a resolution some time ago he would not be a party to borrowing money for roads, and he should therefore support an amendment to reduce the vote by the sum of £100,000.

Mr. THORN moved that the vote be reduced by the first item—£100,000.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Thorn, McLean, Kates, Horwitz, Grimes, Griffith, Macfarlane (Ipswich), Miles, Hendren, and Rea.

NOES, 26.

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

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative, and original question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that £98,250 be granted for Buildings and Water-supply.

Mr. KING wished to draw the attention of the Premier and the Minister for Works to the present condition of the Lands and Works Office. They were not merely a disgrace as Government buildings, but they were also exceedingly dangerous owing to the wooden structures in and about them. The risk of fire was imminent, and in case of fire nothing could save the buildings from being burnt to the ground, and the

conflagration must involve the destruction of all the records of both departments, owing to there not being a single strong room in which they could be stored for safety. Such a loss, he need hardly say, would be irreparable. When preparing this vote some provision ought to have been made for the erection of a proper building for those departments, and in any case some provision should be made for the safety of the records in case of fire.

Mr. THORN said he noticed in the list of buildings every constituency in the colony was "squared" but Ipswich. But Ipswich did not need a bribe; its representatives could always vote straight without it. A more disgraceful estimate was never presented to any Parliament in the Australian colonies. He was astonished at the Premier proposing to borrow money in the old country for the erection of buildings, for when the fact became known in England, as it inevitably would, the Loan would not go off except at a much greater depreciation than was anticipated—indeed, he questioned whether it would be floated at a much higher rate than 80. He calculated that the loss on depreciation would be something like £600,000.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he would repeat the question he put on a previous occasion—namely, whether, in the proposed public buildings at Bowen, provision was made for permanently locating the Northern Supreme Court of the colony there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS laid on the table plans of the proposed buildings at Bowen.

Mr. GRIFFITH, after examining the plans, said they showed that provision was made in them for permanently retaining the Supreme Court at Bowen, and the Committee might therefore take that as settled. There was also another matter which had been mentioned before, and the debate on which was adjourned in order that it might be resumed when this vote came on. He referred to the item of £7,000 for a receiving-gaol at Brisbane, which involved the question of removing all the prisoners from Brisbane to St. Helena. He regretted the absence this evening of the hon. member for Maryborough, who took a special interest in this matter, but it was desirable that the opinion of the House should now be tested as to the advisability of the change. His own opinion was that the proposition was a mistake, and, as the reception-house would require to be at least as large as the existing gaol, he did not think it worth while to borrow money to build a new gaol when they already had one which would do just as well.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said if the hon. member for North Brisbane could find out from those plans that the Judge was to be permanently located at Bowen

he was a cleverer man than he gave him credit for. He (Mr. Palmer) had made a promise that he would give all information of this subject when moving this item, and the hon. gentleman was right in saying that the vote on this question would be taken as decisive. To begin with, he need not be alarmed at the idea that the colony would be run into debt through the change. Although it would be necessary to borrow money for the temporary purpose of building a gaol, if his information was correct a surplus would remain after building a gaol, on a proper principle, for sixty prisoners. In accordance with a promise made when the subject was before the House last, he had caused the material of the present building and the land upon which it stood to be valued. The Colonial Architect, assisted by Mr. Petrie, had valued the material, and a gentleman every way competent (Mr. John Cameron) had valued the ground. In case of a portion of the material being retained for the erection of a new gaol, the value of the material to be retained was valued at £5,200 and the remainder for sale at £1,850; total, £7,050; or, in the event of the whole being sold, including the gaoler's cottage, it was estimated at £4,500. The land was valued at £5,100, making a total—accepting the estimate of £7,050 as the value of the material—of £12,150. He had also caused to be prepared a plan of the proposed new gaol, which he now laid upon the table. It would be constructed on proper principles, of brick, with two wards three storeys high, boundary wall, and proper accommodation for sixty prisoners and everything necessary for the warders. The estimated cost would be: Boundary wall, £2,000; 2 wards, each £2,500, £5,000; kitchens, £500; laundries, £300; stores, £200; sheds, £200; workshops, £400; interior and dividing fences, £300; gaolers' and warders' quarters, £1,100—total, £10,000—and the Colonial Architect was not in the habit of exceeding his estimates. If the valuation were worth anything it showed that the colony would not be run into debt. As to the accommodation at St. Helena, he could inform the Committee that all the prisoners with the exception of thirty-four had been there for weeks, and not the slightest difficulty had been found. He also laid on the table the Sheriff's report, which, like that of the Auditor-General's, was exceedingly one-sided. As he had expected, it was dead against his idea; but he had no intention of being guided by the Sheriff's opinion in the least. The Sheriff said, among other things, that the gaol had been well and carefully managed, but he (Mr. Palmer) did not think so. He went on to say that he had had thirty years' experience, fifteen of which in charge of the gaol, and he might be allowed to have an opinion. That was

quite true, but when he (Mr. Palmer) became Colonial Secretary in 1867, a worse managed gaol than that he never saw. There was no labour for the prisoners, who did nothing but make cabbage-tree hats, the proceeds of which were given to them to buy tobacco with. Since that time he would do the Sheriff the justice to say that he had assisted in carrying out reforms, though he never originated anything. He would simply state that the report was totally against his idea of removing the prisoners, and in one part it stated that St. Helena had never been used for long-sentence prisoners; but the Sheriff was not correct in saying that, as there was nothing new in having long-sentence prisoners in St. Helena. The Sheriff having asked for information as to the daily average of prisoners in St. Helena in 1875 and in 1879, the superintendent at St. Helena pointed out that there was nothing new in having long-sentenced prisoners at St. Helena, for between 1867 and December, 1875, nearly the whole of them were confined there. At the latter date they were transferred to the Brisbane Gaol, the object being to employ them in various trades carried on in that establishment. Only short-sentenced prisoners were then kept at St. Helena; and the staff of officers was reduced from twenty-seven to sixteen. But ever since that date prisoners under long sentences, ranging from five years to life, had been confined at St. Helena, and on several occasions very long-sentenced prisoners were sent there, owing to their health failing from long confinement in Brisbane Gaol. The responsibility of the reduced staff of officers was as great as before, and the superintendent considered that they would be much safer when all the prisoners were transferred to St. Helena, with the proposed addition to the staff. On the 30th November, 1875, thirteen long-sentenced prisoners, from five years to life, were removed from St. Helena to Brisbane Gaol; and there were remaining there at that time ten under similar long sentences—thus showing that the arrangement made to remove all long-sentenced prisoners to Brisbane was never carried out, although the number of officers was reduced to sixteen. He (Mr. Palmer) was more than ever convinced that St. Helena was the proper place for carrying out sentences of penal servitude; the discipline was better, and the prisoners stood a better chance of reforming than when exposed to the temptation in Brisbane Gaol. He had shown that there could be no difficulty in keeping all the prisoners at St. Helena, as there were only thirty-four men in Brisbane Gaol now, unless a few more had gone in lately. Of course, it was necessary that there should be a receiving-gaol near Brisbane, and he had shown that a suitable building could be erected for £10,000, including retaining

wall and workshops for sixty prisoners. If the estimates he had given were worth anything, they proved that the Government would be able to do away with a nasty excrescence, and have a decent building for less money. With regard to the locality, several suitable sites had been marked out within a reasonable distance of Brisbane. The most suitable one was on the bridge lands in South Brisbane, about a mile and a half from the present gaol, not very far from the South Brisbane Cemetery—a very suitable ground, not likely to be built round.

Mr. THORN said he was very thankful to the Minister for Works for having told the Committee, once for all, that the permanent seat of the Supreme Court was to be at Bowen. The plans just laid on the table showed that it would be at Bowen and not at Townsville. If that were not the case, then the Government were frittering away money in the most extravagant way, and it was a greater instance of profligacy than had been seen before. It would be much better if the Colonial Treasurer were to go to the places in the colony that had been accustomed to a large Government expenditure, and teach the people that they must not look to Government in the future. He would again object to any money being borrowed for unproductive works. The Government would lose £600,000 in the proposed loan through depreciation of debentures. He did not believe the next debentures would go at anything like 80 per cent.

Mr. KATES did not believe the depreciation would be 20 per cent.

Mr. KING asked the Minister for Works whether the Government had considered the risk to the records in the Lands and Works Offices from fire?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not thought over the matter himself. It was of great importance to the colony to have its records preserved, and it must be done some day, but it was a question for the House to consider.

Mr. McLEAN thought it would be better to have a distinct building for an hospital, instead of the third storey of the new gaol. The estimate of £4,500 as the value of the material was a very high one, even in the event of the Government selling it all. Persons would not purchase the stone unless they had immediate use for it. The only plan by which the Government could realise the estimate would be to use as much of the material as they possibly could themselves.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was guided by the opinion of the Colonial Architect as to the value of the material. If they offered the whole of it in one lot, and at one time, he did not believe they would get the valuation; but there was no

necessity for doing that. All the prisoners in gaol could be kept in one quarter of the building, and in less if they chose. The intention of the Colonial Architect was to use up as much of the material as he could in the public buildings.

Mr. GRIFFITH did not think the proposed design a satisfactory one. It was an experiment, and had been tried at Townsville and Rockhampton, and he must confess that he was not favourably impressed by it. He observed, also, there was no provision for female prisoners. The Colonial Secretary had not given sufficient reasons for the change that he proposed. No advantage could be gained by it, and the experiment of removing the prisoners to St. Helena should be tried for the next three years to see whether it would be satisfactory. It would be plenty of time then to do away with the present gaol.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that no female prisoners had been kept in Brisbane for years. They were sent to the Fortitude Valley lock-up, and thence to Toowoomba. He took a decidedly opposite view to the hon. gentleman, and was sure he was right.

Mr. GRIFFITH said if the matter was really open for discussion he should move a reduction on the vote by the omission of the item for Brisbane receiving-gaol. If however, the Government were going to support the item with all their forces—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY. Yes; of course.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that if the Government had made up their minds to carry it and place it beyond discussion it would be useless moving an amendment.

In reply to Mr. HENDREN,

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the item of £13,000 for other buildings was intended to provide for public buildings which might be required during the next two or three years.

Mr. McLEAN asked whether the Minister for Works intended to add from this vote the deficiency on the vote that he got last year for the Nerang court house?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS was understood to say that he intended to have put up the court-house referred to, but the vote was not sufficient, and it would be competent for the Government to supplement it out of this vote.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved £70,000 for Electric Telegraph Construction.

Mr. GRIFFITH would like some information as to the business that might be expected on these lines to the far west. They were told that the telegraph lines were not paying, and for that reason the Government had shut up offices in several parts of the colony, and yet they were asked to vote

large sums of money to construct lines to Thorgomindah and the Diamantina. The Government in this were certainly not carrying out the principle of the telegram sent home to the Agent-General and published in the *London Times*, to the effect that they intended to borrow £3,000,000 entirely for reproductive works. He believed in telegraph extension, wherever there was any real necessity shown, but in this case no information was given, although it was customary to do so in moving a vote of this kind.

The PREMIER said he did not think there was any item on the Loan Estimates that would be more reproductive than telegraph construction. The saving in connection with police matters alone would be considerable; and nothing was so conducive to settlement in the outside country as telegraph construction. It was a great deal more profitable than postal communication.

Mr. McLEAN asked if it was the intention of the Government to carry out the same principle with regard to these proposed lines that they adopted in the settled districts—that was, that the parties who benefited by telegraph extension should provide a certain guarantee to cover the working expenses of the stations?

The PREMIER said the Government would carry out the same principle with these extensions that was carried out now.

Mr. WALSH agreed with some of the lines proposed, but thought that the lines from Charters Towers *via* the Cape River, £9,000, and from Aramac to the Diamantina *via* Muttaborra and Wittown, £22,500, were unnecessary and might be omitted.

Mr. KATES was understood to express an opinion that in the present depressed state of the colony they could not afford this large expenditure for telegraph construction, and that the amount ought to be reduced.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Cook objected to the line from Charters Towers to Hughenden, but he would ask that hon. member was there not a greater likelihood of that line paying than the line already in existence between Junction Creek and the Palmer?

The PREMIER said most of these items were introduced by the late Government last year, and approved by the House, and the only reason why they were not passed was, because they were brought down at the end of the session when most of the members were away.

Mr. BAYNES was surprised to find no provision made for a line to connect Nanango with Kilkivan. It was of great importance that that line should be carried out, and he wished to know if the Government would construct it out of the £12,300, general vote for lines not specially provided for?

The PREMIER said there was a telegraph station at Nanango and another at Kilkivan, and he could not at present say whether any great object would be gained by a direct line to connect the two places. If any good reason were brought forward in favour of a direct line he did not see why it should not be carried out, but at present he could make no promise.

Mr. MILES said the hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Griffith) had asked for some information respecting the line to the Diamantina; and he (Mr. Miles) could tell him that that line would go to where nobody lived, and that the whole of the pastoral rents of the district would not pay the interest on the cost of constructing the line.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said as a matter of fact the hon. member was utterly wrong. Outside telegraph stations always paid, and paid handsomely; but it was the small inside stations where there was weekly, tri-weekly, or daily postal communication that did not pay. He had no doubt that the extension to the Diamantina would pay handsomely; and, as for nobody living there, the hon. member knew better. The country out there was heavily stocked, and was being stocked every day, and there could be no doubt that this line would pay. In the item of police expenditure alone there would be a great saving to the country.

Mr. MILES was glad to hear the statement of the hon. gentleman, but he repeated that the whole of the pastoral rents in the Gregory district would not pay the interest on this £22,500.

Mr. HENDREN said some time ago the residents of the Peak Mountain petitioned for telegraphic communication to that place, which was one of the great cross roads of the colony, by which almost all the stock from New South Wales, Warwick, and Fassifern passed through. He hoped that the sum put down for a general vote for lines would include this.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £10,000 be voted for the Defences of the Colony.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that some information should be given as to the objects of such a vote. Surely the Government were not going to turn the whole thing into a farce, yet here was a sum of £10,000 asked for, and nobody knew what was to be done with it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was proposed to expend the money partly on a fortification at Lytton which had not yet sprung into existence, but which had been christened by the hon. member for Maryborough on a memorable occasion by the name of Fort Miles. He might mention

that he had had a long conversation with Colonel Scratchley on the subject of defences, and, amongst other things, that gentleman suggested that the northern portion of the colony had not been properly attended to, and that the least that Townsville should have would be one of the new guns it was proposed to purchase; and if the inhabitants of that town would enrol themselves into a battery of artillery they would also have one of the guns from the Queen's Park. It was also proposed to ask the Volunteer Force at Rockhampton to form an artillery corps out of the two rifle companies there were at present in that town, as the number of Volunteers could not be increased, nor did Colonel Scratchley wish to have it increased. One of the new guns would be sent there, also. That idea and the idea of having artillery at Maryborough were not new, but the Townsville idea was a new one. The vote, added to a balance now in hand, was proposed to be partly expended on Fort Miles and the balance to go to the purchase of torpedoes. There was no doubt it was the duty of the colony to be prepared for war to a certain extent, and a stock of torpedoes was very necessary. The two additional guns would cost £4,000, so that the hon. gentleman would see that they were expensive things and ran into a good deal of "siller."

Mr. WALSH could not understand how such an item got on the Loan Estimates. He was in favour of having it struck out, as £10,000 for defences would go a very little way.

After an explanation from the COLONIAL SECRETARY, and a protest from Mr. BAYNES against general taxation for the defence of the northern coast,

Question—That the sum of £10,000 be voted—put.

The Committee divided :—

AYES, 16.

Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Perkins, King, Macrossan, Baynes, Stevens, Low, Stevenson, Morehead, Hill, H. W. Palmer, Hamilton, Amhurst, Lalor, and Swanwick.

NOES, 9.

Messrs. Griffith, McLean, Rea, Horwitz, Grimes, Persse, Walsh, Kates, and Miles.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The PREMIER moved £139,000, depreciation Debentures Loan 1878.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Chairman reported progress, leave being given to sit again to-morrow, when the report of the Committee was ordered to be received.

On the motion of the PREMIER the House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 12 o'clock until to-morrow.