

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 1879

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 23 September, 1879.

Northern Railway.—The Dry Dock.—Assent to Bills.—
Hansard.—Central Railway.—Northern Railway.—
Townsville Railway Deviation.—Plans, &c., Central
Railway.—Southern and Western Railway.—Plans,
&c., Central Railway.—Railway Reserves Bill.—
Conduct of Business.

NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. Box asked the Postmaster-General—

1. What is the mileage of the Northern Railway the construction of which has already been authorised?
2. How many miles have already been constructed?
3. For how many miles have tenders been accepted?
4. When is it probable the whole distance authorised by Parliament will be completed?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL answered—

1. From Townsville, 50 miles.
2. None, but 35 miles are under construction.
3. Twenty (20) miles under the large contract, and fifteen (15) under the small contract system.
4. Thirty-five (35) miles will be completed by 1st September, 1880, but no contract has yet been made for the remainder of the distance authorised.

THE DRY DOCK.

Mr. COWLISHAW asked the Postmaster-General—

1. Have any further payments been made by the Government to Messrs. Overend and Co. since 30th June, on account of contract for construction of Dry Dock at South Brisbane?—If so, what are the various amounts so paid up to date?

2. How much of the deposit money, if any, have the Government retained in terms of their contract?

3. What percentage of the value of the work performed has been, and should have been, retained from Messrs. Overend and Co. in terms of the contract?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL answered—

1. No.
2. The whole.
3. The retention money has been paid up on the 30th June in each year, as the work progressed.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Messages from the Governor were received informing the House that His Excellency had assented to the following Bills:—

Life Insurance Bill

Mineral Oils Bill

Warwick School of Arts Land Sale Bill.

HANSARD.

Mr. WALSH moved—

1. That the report of the Hansard Committee be now adopted.

2. That the said report be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly, by message, requesting their concurrence in the recommendations embodied in the same.

He said the select committee were appointed by the Council on the 23rd of July

To inquire into and report upon the feasibility of issuing a more frequent or earlier publication of Hansard in connection with the proceedings of this House.

He need not take up much of honourable members' time. The evidence spoke for itself, and bore out the necessity for the daily issue of the reports of their debates. The report alluded to the evidence, and showed that it was founded to a certain extent upon it. In urging the House to adopt the report, it was not desirable for him again to go over the ground that he had gone over before, with the object of showing that there was an absolute necessity for the circulation of a reliable representation of the proceedings of the Upper Chamber of Legislature. Hitherto, especially during the present session, the evidence testified to members not having that opportunity which members elsewhere had of analysing the debates which were not finished, or part of which had taken place on a day before that on which they were

called upon to record their decision on any important question. Nor had the public an opportunity to understand what the Council did, except by references in the language of ridicule by the public Press to what took place in their Chamber. It was almost painful to have to admit it, but such was the way in which the proceedings of their Chamber were adverted to by the Press generally, for many years past. He believed that a more unjust and improper attitude was never taken up towards a body of gentlemen than that taken up by the "Fourth Estate," as the Press called itself, in its relations with the Legislative Council. Even in this morning's paper, he noticed, when the conductors were unable apparently to publish one bit of the evidence given against it by the witnesses examined by, nor to contradict the report that was brought up from, the committee, he found them ashamed of the course they had pursued towards the Council and the country, which was most concerned—because honourable members were the last who cared to read their own speeches—and coming forward with the pitiable excuse, and with insulting remarks intermixed, which he would read, in order that honourable gentlemen might see what was dealt out to them even at the last moment: the vileness of the statements, the lowness of the vituperation, and the baseness of the spirit of the public Press. The *Courier* said:—

Since Mr. Walsh's advent to the Upper House several complaints have been made that the Chamber does not receive justice at the hands of the Press, as far as the reporting of its proceedings is concerned. Honourable members who labour under the pleasant idea that the public is thirsting for a perusal of the important utterances which go to swell the pages of *Hansard* are always ready to lay charges of this kind, and to complain of misreporting, but it is rarely any of them are found making efforts to lighten the work of the reporters or to afford them facilities for ensuring the accuracy of their reports. The difficulty of hearing in the reporters' gallery of the Council is well known to everyone connected with the place—.

He (Mr. Walsh) did not believe it. He had been told by persons who frequented the reporters' gallery that it was one of the best places to listen to members. That excuse was never made before: if it had been made, he had no doubt the difficulty would have been rectified. Now, however, that the conductors of that journal found they were not able to carry on their system of ridicule and of ignoring the proceedings of the Council, they came forward with that pitiable reason for it—that the reporters could not hear. If he was the employer of those gentlemen, the reporters—he did not believe it was they who sat in the gallery who made such an

excuse, but their employers—all he could say was, that if they could not hear, he would get gentlemen who could hear. None were so deaf as those who would not hear. The gentlemen who reported for the Press, and those who wrote for the Press, were too frequently stigmatised by their employers for doing that which they did not do. He knew it was the practice, in their absence, to lay the blame on the reporters—on the shorthand writers. But it appeared, now, that there was something new—a new reason was discovered for what the Press had done against the House. It was not, now, that the proceedings of the Council were not worth reporting—the excuse to the public that was not considered to be entitled to know what took place in the Council as well as in another place;—it was, that the reporters could not hear. He did not believe a word of it. He did not believe that the reporters ever made such a statement; he did not believe that there was any difficulty in regard to the gallery. If there was, it was strange that the House had not heard of it before. He did not choose to read out that part of the misstatement in the paper which was particularly insulting to honourable gentlemen; but it was only what they had had to put up with ever so long, that he supposed they would consider it beneath their notice. But there was something that ought to go forth to the public, and it was a very fair description, indeed, a very mild description, of the manner in which the proceedings of the Council had been made known to the public. "As a matter of fact," it was said—

the reporters hear less than one-half of what is said, and a good deal of their reporting is almost guess-work.

All he could say was, that it was time the House did away with that "guess-work." He was pretty sure that when the Press criticised the remarks that he made in the House, it was "guess-work," and something worse. Honourable members should take care that better work should be applied to their action. There were now two excuses on the part of the Press for its misconduct;—one that the reporters could not hear in the gallery—he did not believe it;—and the other that their accounts of the proceedings of the House were guess-work. All he could say was, that the Council were not justified in taking such an excuse or in tolerating longer such goings on towards the country. It was time the Council should make known their proceedings, which were of equal value, as far as they went, to the sayings and doings in another place, which appeared daily. It was time that they insisted upon getting carried out arrangements to give a full and fair and early report to the public generally of the debates in the Council. If honour-

able gentlemen would turn to the report of the select committee, they would see that

Your committee are unanimously of opinion—more especially as affecting the current session—that the proceedings of your honourable House, by medium of the daily Press, or otherwise, have not been, nor are, sufficiently made known to the public.

In the evidence, questions and answers 119, 200, honourable members would find that that was demonstrated:—

All the witnesses demonstrate the feasibility of circulating, in one form or another, a more frequent issue of *Hansard*; but the weight of evidence points to the advantages, economical and departmental, of incorporating the Legislative Council *Hansard* with that issued so successfully by the Legislative Assembly.

If honourable members would turn to questions 289, 301, and further on, they would see that that portion of the report was supported by evidence:—

Your Committee therefore recommend—

1st. That the sanction of the Legislative Assembly be invited by message in the usual form, to the amalgamation of the respective *Hansards*.

By reference to the evidence, especially questions 38, 78, 207, and 306, honourable members would see that not only should that be done, according to the opinion of the witness, but that it could be done economically, and easily, and cheerfully. He believed that there would be a little difficulty experienced in bringing that about; but, if the Council agreed to the report, he was satisfied that the President would take the matter in hand loyally and cheerfully, and would see that the carrying out of the main object in view would not be prevented by any difficulty in another place. He was afraid that the House must look to him, at any rate, for overcoming any difficulty. If what they wanted could not be obtained in the way recommended, then there was an alternative recommendation in paragraph 4 of the report:—

In the event of the honourable the Legislative Assembly not concurring in the foregoing proposition, your Committee then recommend to your Honourable House that the President be authorised to make all such other arrangements as will be necessary to ensure the circulation on the following morning of each day's Council's proceedings and business done.

He (Mr. Walsh) called the particular attention of honourable members to that clause, because by their concurrence in it, it would be an expression of opinion on the part of the Council as to the absolute necessity of their determination to carry it out forthwith. He did trust that honourable members who had taken the trouble to peruse carefully the evidence, or who had obtained the opinion of the public outside respecting the want that was

experienced of a fair and frequent report of the proceedings of the Council, would, whatever might be the cost, whatever might be the difficulties that their worthy President would have to surmount;—that they would make up their minds that the proceedings of the Council should, next session, be as carefully and faithfully and expeditiously reported and published as the proceedings of the other Chamber. There could be no justification whatever for their sanctioning treatment of themselves different from that which was accorded to the Legislative Assembly. It appeared to him to be of so much importance that what he asked for should be done, because the very existence of, the necessity for, the Upper House, resting on the one fact that the Council were a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature, so was it necessary that a co-equal circulation of their proceedings, and of their reasons for taking such proceedings, should be published every day, just as the debates of the Lower House were. There were suggestions amongst the evidence tendered to the committee, mentioned in paragraph 5 of the report, which the committee thought were very “well worthy of the consideration of both Houses”;—though the committee felt that the subject did not absolutely come within the scope of the instruction to them from the House, they desired to make reference to the evidence taken in connection therewith.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: As a member of the *Hansard* Committee, he rose to state that he had no intention of opposing the report; though he was free to confess that he did not feel any very warm interest in it. He thought there was a great deal of evidence taken which might well have been excluded, and that all the information that the House desired to enable them to proceed might have been contained in about a quarter of the space of the document that had been laid before the House. At the same time, it was perhaps an error on the right side to take rather too much evidence than too little. Of course, everything depended upon the feeling of the other House; if the Legislative Assembly were willing to consent to the incorporation of the reports of the Council proceedings in their own *Hansard*, the recommendation of the report would be carried out without much difficulty, and the object of the mover would be attained. But if the Council had to fall back on the alternative, he did not think the mover would obtain the further publicity that he desired, because he was quite certain that a *Hansard* containing reports of the proceedings of this House only would not have the wide circulation that the reports of the Legislative Assembly *Hansard* had. He would not take up the time of the House, but he thought it neces-

sary to state only that he thought it would be advantageous to the public if the proceedings of the House were presented in a judiciously condensed form, and that it would certainly be a convenience to honourable members who wished to debate questions, if they could see at some time on the following day speeches that had been made in the House on the previous day.

Mr. MEIN said he would vote for the adoption of the report, because, although not anxious to see a daily *Hansard* in connection with this House, yet he felt confident that every honourable member must be aware that the public was very ignorant of what went on in the Legislative Council. The metropolitan newspapers were the only portion of the Press that gave circulation to any reports of the proceedings of the House. For reasons which might be satisfactory to the proprietors of those newspapers, their reports were very meagre, and did not fairly represent the bulk of the discussions which took place in the Upper Chamber. So long as the Legislative Assembly had the whole of their utterances published daily, and put before the public very fully, and so long as the Council were not brought directly into contact with the public, the tendency would be to ignore their existence. They were a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature, and could do a great deal of good or of harm to the country. It was only fair, under the circumstances, that the whole of their utterances should be put before the public. On more than one occasion certain honourable members had felt it necessary to bring under the notice of the House the gross misrepresentation of their sayings and doings which had been put forth by a portion of the Press. He had had to do so himself. No later than last week a gross misrepresentation of his utterances appeared in a newspaper with which a prominent member of the House was directly connected. He simply referred to the matter to show that there was cause for the complaint that had been very frequently made, and the repetition of which had a tendency to injure individuals in the eyes of the public, and even in the estimation of the House. If by a not too extravagant expenditure of money the real sentiments and utterances of honourable members could be put before the public, it would be only doing justice to themselves to incur that expenditure, and it would be the means of contributing valuable information to the country. On those grounds he gave his support to the proposition now before the House. He did not know that any great gain would be achieved by publishing their reports daily with the Assembly's *Hansard*. That might possibly give rise to an amount of expenditure which might be considered unreasonable, but he thought

it would be possible, without increasing the expense of their *Hansard* to a very great extent, to have the reports of their debates brought before the public in the way that they desired, if, instead of publishing the book *Hansard* every week, the reports were published in a broad sheet and prefixed to the first daily issue of the Legislative Assembly *Hansard* in the following week. He thought in that way their object would be gained, and that practically the cost would not be increased at all, or no more than a trifling extent. Presuming that the motion would be carried, and that the President would be enabled to obtain all that the report suggested, he might, if honourable gentlemen did not dissent from the suggestion, he (Mr. Mein) had thrown out, make it a part of his negotiations to ascertain whether there would be any objection on the part of the other branch of the Legislature to agree to an arrangement of that sort.

Mr. HEUSSLER said, as he had the honour of being one of the members of the *Hansard* Committee, he would make a few remarks on what had fallen from the honourable Mr. Mein. He had a distinct recollection that in the evidence, one of the witnesses—the Shorthand Writer to the other Chamber, Mr. Senior—had stated that it would not be any very large expense to have the Council *Hansard* attached to the daily *Hansard* of the Assembly. In so far, he thought it would be decidedly an advantage to have it so attached, as, after a week had elapsed, a great deal of the interest in a question had passed away; and it was much the best to have the Council proceedings before the public promptly, and in that direction to choose, if possible, the form of a daily *Hansard*. Of course, if they could not choose that, they must have as frequent a publication as they could: if they could not get the greater, they must take the lesser.

The PRESIDENT: Honourable gentlemen—I think this question is one of so much importance that we ought not to be satisfied with any half measure. Having to deal with the subject of *Hansard*, I think we ought to feel obliged to the honourable Mr. Walsh, who took it up in the first instance. Recollecting that it is of as much consequence to the colony that our utterances shall be placed before the public as promptly as the utterances of members in another place, inasmuch as we may undo the good that is done by the other House of Parliament, or, at any rate, that this Chamber may do as much good as the other Chamber; if we are unrepresented by the inadequate publication of our debates, the public may be misled in regard to what we say and do. To secure what is now required by us is only a question of expense, but yet of such an amount as we should not shrink for

one moment from incurring, or enforcing, if necessary. The whole amount cannot be very great, as the evidence gives us to understand. I think it will not be found impossible to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to place on the Estimates a sufficient sum of money next session to carry out the objects of the report.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Question put and passed.

A message was sent to the Legislative Assembly forthwith.

CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said, in moving the first of the resolutions upon railways standing in his name on the notice paper, to-day, it was not necessary that he should occupy the time of the House very long. His motion was:—

1. That this House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Extension of the Central Railway from 197 miles to 260 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 16th instant.
2. That such approval be notified by message to the Legislative Assembly in the usual form.

The extension was from Retreat to the other side of the five miles over the Belyando River. Honourable members could see it on the map which he laid on the table. Although the form of previous resolutions adopted by the House was adhered to, he must state that the line went entirely through Crown lands, and therefore the plans and sections now submitted were unaccompanied by a book of reference. The line, as honourable members were well aware, had been very economically constructed—as compared with the southern lines—from Westwood as far as Emerald, the point to which it was now open. The portion from Emerald to Retreat, 27 miles, was under contract at the present time for a sum of £1,945 per mile; and, allowing £500 per mile for the permanent-way, the entire cost of the extension now under construction would be £2,445 per mile. No doubt a portion of the extension to be authorised beyond Retreat would be expensive. The engineer's estimate showed that there were about 15 miles of the line out of 63 miles now proposed part of which which would cost from £8,000 to £10,000 per mile; but, as the remainder was over very easy country, and as the whole 130 miles of extension was very easy with the exception of that small portion of 10 or 15 miles, the engineer was perfectly certain that he could construct, and, in fact, had undertaken to construct, the whole length at an average cost of £3,000 per mile. It would be seen by the plans and sections on the table that the country had been carefully surveyed.

The whole of the gradients were shown, and there could be no doubt whatever that as the same engineering surveyors were employed on the extension as had already been employed on the preceding 197 miles, they were enabled to make a very fair estimate of what the cost of construction would actually be. He did not think there would be any difference of opinion in the House as to the direction that the Central Railway ought to take. It had been carried as nearly as possible due west. In the other House, honourable members on both sides acknowledged—indeed, there was no doubt at all expressed—that the route adopted was the correct one.

Mr. MEIN said he had already expressed his views on the extension of the main trunk railways into the interior. He simply rose now to express his surprise that the Postmaster-General had given the House such meagre information as to this very important work. They were asked to sanction an extension of sixty-three miles of the Central Railway, and the honourable gentleman had positively not placed before the House the slightest information connected with the work, or the necessity for it. Simply a map was unrolled before honourable gentlemen showing a superficial indication of the country through which the line passed, but no information whatever concerning the nature of the surrounding country. The specifications were of course in the usual form, but beyond that, and the small tracing, and the statement of the Postmaster-General that the engineer had guaranteed that he would construct the railway at an average of £3,000 per mile, no information had been afforded to the House to show—no assumption even had been made—that the line was likely to pay. The House had nothing before them to show the character of the country, no indication of the produce that would be received from it and that the railway would have to bring to market; nothing to prove that the line would be really valuable to bring to market any produce; nothing to prove that there would be traffic from either goods or passengers. But the House were expected to swallow the proposition for making sixty-three miles of railway simply at the request of the honourable gentleman, without any reason assigned which ought to convince the House. Personally, he (Mr. Mein) was disinclined to swallow the railway, or even the suggestions of the Postmaster-General that the work was desirable or necessary. He was opposed to the simultaneous construction of the three main trunk lines—parallel in one sense, because they all diverged in the same direction, due west—but not parallel in other respects, because the Central line was clearly intended to tap, and it could have no other possible result, the whole of the interior

traffic of the country, to make it go to the sea-board by way of Rockhampton.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No.

Mr. MEIN: Even the Postmaster-General's own organ, which had misrepresented in a disgraceful way his (Mr. Mein's) utterances in the House on this very subject, assumed practically what he now said. The people of Rockhampton were in a state of jubilation over the passing of the Loan Bill through the Council and the carrying of the Loan Estimates. However, as the House had assented to the Bill, he did not intend to re-open the subject, except to express his dissent to the policy of the three extensions. The Postmaster-General's remarks on the present occasion were inconsistent with the Loan Estimates of the Government. What was stated when the Loan Bill was brought before the House? Honourable members had been assured that the Central line would cost £3,000 per mile, including the permanent-way. The Loan Estimates provided for the extension of 130 miles at £3,000 per mile. But, now, the Postmaster-General admitted that fifteen miles out of the present proposed section would cost from £8,000 to £10,000 per mile. Well, that would swallow £150,000 of the amount put down in the Loan Estimates for the whole extension of 130 miles; so that if any reliance was to be placed on his figures, the balance would not be sufficient to carry out the work. Instead of showing that the railway could be constructed for £2,500 per mile, including the cost of the permanent-way, he should have shown the House that including the permanent-way the line could be constructed at a cost of £2,000 per mile. Honourable members could see that the first extension proposed after the passing of the Loan Bill was a direct contradiction of the figures which were laid before the House when the Loan Estimates were being discussed. In the space of two weeks they saw the Government out £500 a mile on the first extension of the railways. What must be the probable results after actual experience in the construction of the lines during the next three years? The House were simply taking a leap in the dark, so far as the expenditure was concerned. In regard to the relative amount of traffic and other matters in which the success of the railway was concerned, he had already stated his opinion. He considered that the House had by their action on the Loan Estimates practically committed themselves to the extension of the Central Railway, and unless honourable gentlemen were prepared to go back from their word they would have to vote for the proposed line. His own feeling was the same as ever. That line should not be constructed for the purpose of competing with the Southern Railway and practically running it out of the field. The

result of extending the Central Railway would be that the interior traffic would be diverted to Rockhampton, and that the extension of the Western Railway beyond Roma would end in its being an unremunerative public work. However, the responsibility rested with the House, and he would leave it to them.

Mr. Box was understood to argue that the plans laid before the House were not complete in the same way as were other plans, which he had examined, for the extension of the Southern Railway beyond Roma, and for the Northern Railway. He did not think that the whole of the extensions proposed hung upon one another, though the policy of the Government was that the three main trunk railways should be extended simultaneously. Money was voted for the Northern Railway last session. He feared that the House could not ascertain what would be the actual cost of the works proposed, and he did not feel that the House were justified in accepting the plans now before them. He suggested that in future when such works were proposed, the House should insist that complete plans and specifications and every proper document should be laid before them for a longer period than in the present instance—not for forty-eight hours only—so that honourable members might have time to inquire into the correctness of the estimates; and, if necessary, refer them to a select committee. He was desirous of impressing upon the House the wisdom of some such course. He unhesitatingly said the plans now before the House were not satisfactory to honourable members on his side, and he considered that those honourable members and himself were entitled to ask the Government for fuller information than was now afforded. He had been consistent in his support of the Government, and he expected to have all the information from them that he thought necessary when he was asked to enter upon the consideration of such an important undertaking as the making of a railway. He could not help thinking that some stringent regulation was required in respect to dealing with public works of the kind now brought before the House.

Mr. MEIN: Hear, hear.

Mr. PETTIGREW said it struck him that since he last spoke on the subject before the House the Postmaster-General might have given such information as he had asked for. For reasons best known to himself, that honourable gentleman did not give any information commensurate to the importance of the subject. The House ought not to agree to involve the country in a large expenditure for railways which could not by any possibility pay the working expenses, or if they paid the working expenses the returns would not leave a sufficient margin to pay the interest on the

loan. He had listened as attentively as he could to the Postmaster-General, but could not pick up from him what revenue was likely to be derived from the extension of the Central Railway, or what traffic could be secured to make it pay. He did not consider that any of those enormously expensive works which were to go into the desert should be made at all. It had been stated in the House by the honourable Mr. Mein that the Central Railway would go through more than fifty miles of desert. That statement had not been contradicted. At best that railway would do no more than run out into the grass country and connect sheep runs. He had looked at the plans and sections of the works which the Postmaster-General said would cost £2,500 per mile. A portion of the line, however, as the honourable gentleman admitted himself, would cost from £8,000 to £10,000 per mile. If that were so, he (Mr. Pettigrew) did not know how the Government would manage to make the rest of the railway for the amount stated. The figures were the Postmaster-General's own; but the honourable gentleman had not gone into any other detail connected with the subject. Would he now state how he thought the work would be done? He (Mr. Pettigrew) objected to the Central Railway extension;—he objected to the two Northern railways, and he regarded them both as log-rolling railways, which it would be very hard to make pay. It might pay to make the Southern and Western line, which went through very easy country; but the Central Railway now before the House went through mountainous country and desert.

Mr. MEIN: Mountains and swamps.

Mr. PETTIGREW: Miles of a useful and profitable railway elsewhere could be made for what the fifteen miles of railway in the mountainous country traversed by the Central Railway would cost. Those were some of the reasons for which he thought the House should not consent to the extension of the Central Railway.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It was necessary for him to correct a statement he just made.

Mr. MEIN: Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He had stated that there were fifteen miles of the lines to go over rangy country; but he should have explained that only two or three miles of the line over that rangy country, not all of it, would cost £10,000 per mile. He had stated, and he now repeated, that the Chief Engineer, Mr. Ballard, had offered to undertake the construction of the whole 130 miles' extension of the Central Railway for an average cost of £3,000 per mile. He said, also, that the section now under construction would cost, including everything, only £2,445 per mile.

Mr. MEIN: That is going over the flats and swamps.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: They all knew, and the honourable Mr. Pettigrew must know as well as anyone, that until within the last few months, since the depression set in, the revenue of the Central Railway had been on the increase, and that it had netted 3 per cent. of the interest on the amount expended upon it. Five years ago, before the extension beyond Westwood was carried out, it did not pay at all; but, the further it had been extended from that point the more it had paid, and the further it was extended the better it would still pay. The truth of that was proved by the returns presented to the House from time to time. He had no doubt that when the line got over the rangy country it would be an absolutely profitable and reproductive work. He believed the Central Railway would prove to be one of the most remunerative railways in Australia. It had been constructed economically; it was worked economically, and, on the whole, it went over very easy country. With regard to the seventy miles of desert that had been spoken of, he would say that there were not fifty miles of that line passing over anything like as bad country as that between Dalby and Roma. It was not a desert at all. He knew that it was certainly not first-class agricultural land; but it was not a desert by any means.

Mr. WALSH said he did not think anybody disputed the fact about the Central Railway costing less proportionately than any other line in the colony. He believed it would be constructed for something like £5,000 per mile; but he did not believe it could be completed for anything like £3,000 per mile. No doubt it would be done as cheaply as it possibly could be done. So far, he had no objection to the railway itself. His objection was to passing a motion this afternoon in the way proposed. When the House were urged to pass the Loan Bill to authorise the raising of money for carrying out the Central and other railways and public works, some honourable members took objection to it because the Bill seemed to commit the House to the particular works named in the estimates. Other honourable members on the side of the representative of the Government said no, the Bill did not commit them, and that they did not intend to vote for all the works proposed and named therein. That was the position laid down by honourable gentlemen opposite to him. As regarded the three western extensions, it did seem very strange that honourable gentlemen, after being induced to forego a certain amount of opposition, did not take exception to any proposal of the Government, as they said they would. He (Mr. Walsh) had his doubts of their intentions at the time; but he would now test the question and divide the House.

The more he considered the subject the more thoroughly he believed that there was nothing to justify the proposed expenditure on the Central Railway. The cheapness at which it was alleged the line would be constructed did not justify it. There was no population in the country over which the line was to be carried;—there was no promise of traffic in produce for a railway to justify it. Let honourable members take a bird's-eye view, or a mental view, of the country. What would they find? Imagine a railway penetrating a wilderness without people—absolutely without property to attract a population. He ventured to say that the Central Railway would not enter any district where stations would be found nearer than an average of thirty miles of each other. He asserted positively that between those stations there was no population whatever, and there would be no population at any future time. There was nothing to induce population to go out there. The line passed by no township, and he knew it would not lead to the establishment of any. It would traverse a wilderness; it was to penetrate that wilderness; and yet in a certain sense the country was settled. It was as much populated now as it would be twelve or twenty years hence—in fact, more populated now than it would be in future years. He foretold the same decadence of the pastoral interest there as had taken place in other districts of the colony. There would be less employment for labour in the future than now. In illustration of what he said he could refer to one district—he need not name it—in which he had spent the happiest and best years of his life, which was thickly populated at one time, but at present was sparsely peopled; so much so that there was nothing to justify a railway there. The same causes—natural causes—which brought that district into its present state were operating in other districts, and would have the same result in the district that the Central Railway was penetrating as in the district of which he had personal experience. The district which the Central Railway traversed would not become more thickly populated or more profitably settled than it was at present, even if a thousand railways permeated it. Honourable members were aware that to such a high state had cattle and sheep farming been brought that every year less labour was needed to manage stations devoted to either class of stock than ever before; and fewer men were now employed in working stations than were found necessary formerly. If the Government were making a railway to a place where there was a dense population, though it was a 1,000 miles distant, they would have something to justify them in going on, even gradually. The railway under discussion would go out to one of the richest pastoral districts

in the world, he admitted; but it never could be anything but a pastoral country, not a populated country, simply because of the climate. It was not suited for any other industry. It was his firm conviction that nothing on earth could justify the making of a railway to a merely squatting district, unless the Legislature could immediately and coincidentally put an assessment on stock, and unless the squatters who occupied that country acknowledged that they were thereby willing to recoup the State for the expenditure which such an extravagant road to their stations necessitated. If the squatters would do that, and submit to an assessment to meet the interest on the loan for the railway, he would at once withdraw his opposition to the present motion. To make railways on borrowed capital without some such provision was to impose a tax on the people of the colony for what was to benefit only a few. Unless the House got a promise from those who would derive the fullest advantage from the railway, and from the Government, that an assessment on stock should be imposed which would pay the interest on the expenditure, he must oppose the making of the Central Railway and all such extensions. He was sorry that he had thus to oppose what was regarded as the great civilizer of the country; but it was absolutely necessary that he should express his opinions and his feelings, which were very strong on the subject, because there was at present no justification for the Central Railway or the other extensions. He repeated that the Postmaster-General had shown the House nothing of a prospect of business along the line, no probable commerce from population or produce, no increase of profitable occupation of the country hereafter to compensate the colony for the expenditure. Any prudent man who was about to spend his own money would calculate the chances of a return upon it before incurring liability in any undertaking. The Government should do the same, and not enter upon the expenditure of over £3,000,000 of borrowed capital without properly calculating the chances of a beneficial result. The Government, like their predecessors, seemed too anxious to go into the London market to raise money; but they ought to remember that there was something to be done quite apart from the spending of it. He would oppose every line that was projected for the benefit of the squatters, until provision was made to relieve the people from the burdens which the railway extensions would otherwise impose on them.

Mr. MURRAY-PRIOR rose to speak, he said, because of the reference of the honourable Mr. Walsh to the position of honourable members who sat with the representative of the Government. There could be no doubt that the raising of large loans

was not a course which every Government ought to pursue; but perhaps the course at present found necessary by the Government might be regarded as wholly due to their predecessors. He was inclined to attribute the whole fault of the present system to preceding Governments, and the friends of honourable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House were responsible for it. When the Loan Bill was brought forward in the Council he stated that he should like very much to oppose it. He did think the country was not in a fit state to justify the borrowing of money for public works; and that it would be able to carry on for a few years longer without increasing its debts—at any rate, to any considerable amount. But, if the House were to throw out the railways now proposed—and he should be glad to join any honourable members who would on clear grounds organise to effect that—they would very much embarrass the Government, in whom he, for one, had more confidence than he had had in the Government that preceded them, and that he regarded as responsible in greatest measure for the reckless railway expenditure into which the colony was plunged. He did not agree with the proposed expenditure; still, he would rather see the present Government enter upon it than any other Government. If it were possible that a party could be formed in Parliament consisting of able men who were ready to carry on the Government of the country without borrowing money, for a few years, it would be the best thing that could happen for Queensland. But, he feared, that could not be. The country was educated to spending loans. If such a party were formed, the Government might be embarrassed; even, they might have to go out of office; but a general election would show that the country wanted a continuance of the policy of expending loans. It might appear easy, and very good to unmake; but it was doubtful, if any such change as he suggested would better the existing state of things, for the reasons stated. He disliked the Loan Bill; but he disliked still more the manner in which the present proposal was brought before the House, and in which the papers were laid on the table. Honourable members had not had time to examine the nature of the work. He supposed that very few honourable members present had really taken the trouble to examine them or to measure the work. However, he intended to vote for the Government. For the future, whoever the Government might be, he intended that they should not bring forward plans and sections for the House to swallow hurriedly, as in the present instance. The exigencies of the Government might be their excuse, on this occasion. It would be better for

all Governments that the House should cordially concur in a resolution by which they would be prevented from pushing forward railway proposals so hurriedly in future.

Mr. COWLISHAW said, when the Loan Bill was before the Council the Postmaster-General assured them that the Government would not go on with the main trunk railway extensions if they would cost more than £3,000 a mile. He wished to know whether, in the event of the 63 miles of railway now proposed exceeding that estimate, the Government would be prepared to abandon the work? The House had heard a statement from the honourable gentleman that there were about fifteen miles of the line which would cost from £8,000 to £10,000 per mile. After some discussion, and being evidently posted up, he stated that there were only two miles, or perhaps a little more, that would cost that amount. It ought to have been a very easy matter, he (Mr. Cowlshaw) should imagine, for the honourable gentleman to have stated, in the first instance, the whole length of the line that was to be exceptionally costly out of the sixty-three miles. The maps were placed on the table. They afforded very meagre information indeed; and there was no specification to give one an idea of what work was to be performed in any section in carrying out the line. The country the line had to go through was open; but he would say that the greater portion of the railway would not cost less than £5,000 or £6,000 per mile. It would be only fair to the House for the Postmaster-General to state, before they went to the vote, that if the railway would exceed a cost of £4,000 per mile, the Government would abandon it. It was very evident that if fifteen miles of the line were to cost £8,000 or £10,000 per mile—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He had corrected his statement. It was an unintentional mistake.

Mr. COWLISHAW: He should like to know how the Postmaster-General could say that only two miles of the line would be extra costly—because the information that the honourable gentleman had in the first instance must have been as good as that he had now. Apparently, and he (Mr. Cowlshaw) had looked over all the papers, there was not sufficient information before the House. There should have been some returns from the engineer in support of the estimate put forward. The mere statement that the engineer was prepared to carry out the line for £3,000 per mile was valueless. Honourable members knew what such statements were worth. They were generally made to induce persons to enter into works or contracts for works; and as soon as the 63 miles' extension was commenced it would be useless to stop the works. It would

take only about £2,000 per mile, besides £500 for the permanent-way, to complete the proposed line, said the Postmaster-General; but according to his own figures it would cost a larger sum than £390,000 to carry out the whole of the extension of the Central Railway. The House required further information before they voted for the proposition now submitted to them.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. GREGORY: The general question of the advisability of going into the market for a loan to carry on public works had been discussed on a former occasion; and he had no intention of reopening it. But he wished to confine his remarks to the consideration of the subject before the House. The further extension of railways to the distant districts of the colony was affirmed several sessions ago, and the country was then committed to a definite railway policy. It was with a portion of that policy the House had now to deal, and to consider how far the Central line should be carried. There would be differences of opinion as to whether railway extension should progress at considerable speed, or whether it should progress at a ratio commensurate to the power of the Government to introduce labour into the country. As a matter of course, with the latter consideration and the desirableness of proceeding on a reasonable and economical scale, the House had more to do than with any question as to the immediate cost of the line. He should qualify that conclusion to this extent: if, when the surveys were carried on to completion, it was found that the railway could not be constructed within such limits of cost as common-sense would approve, the Government should cease railway construction altogether. The line at present under discussion was in very much the condition that the Parliament building would be in if the walls having been raised to the wall-plates they should decline to put on the roof. The parallel was complete. They had gone sufficiently far with the Central Railway to know that unless they went farther they would not derive all the advantages that the line as projected was likely to bring. Honourable members were aware that it had just reached a tract of country which was not likely to be densely peopled by an agricultural class, nor occupied by additional pastoralists. But beyond that limited area to where it was proposed to extend the line was a very large extent of valuable and productive country. The region to which he alluded was solely occupied for pastoral purposes, but it was not occupied up to its capabilities; though the great extent to which it was occupied and its productiveness could hardly be known to the world. He had taken some trouble to ascertain, by reference to the returns from that district, the number

of stations and the quantity of stock out there at the present time, and he was surprised how great they were and how rapidly the pastoral wealth had augmented. From this stand point he argued that the House might safely and wisely continue to carry out the Central line into the far interior. Although it passed through inferior country, ultimately it would reach the richest region of the colony, which had been spoken of so frequently and which lay beyond the barren country. The question had been raised in the House lately in regard to railway construction, as to what portion of the community would derive the greatest benefit from the extension of the trunk lines into the far interior. He had heard it said over and over again by honourable members who ought to know something of the question, that those railways were for the especial benefit of the pastoralists. He should like to put it to any thinking man, what would become of towns—what would become of the commercial interests—if the one great producing interest of the colony upon which depended so many other interests—upon which depended so largely the yield of revenue—was to be checked, hampered, and retarded by the want of means of communication? He should be very glad if some honourable gentleman got up and showed him statistics that would convince him that the wealth of the colony was derived from any other source in the same proportion as it was derived from the pastoral occupants of the interior. Mining pursuits—especially gold mining—they were all aware had yielded enormously large returns to the wealth of the country; but mining returned a very small proportion of revenue—in fact, very much less than it ought to contribute. Mining was no doubt a very important element in the progress of Queensland. It was impossible to deny that, to the gold discoveries and the tin discoveries, much of the later prosperity of Queensland was due. However, it was capable of absolute demonstration that at the present moment the wealth of the colony, whatever it might be, was to be ascribed more immediately to the pastoral interest than to any other interest. The extension of railways into that interior was due to that interest in its relation to the prosperity of the colony; and it was due in the interest of a large future population and of agricultural settlement. The depression that the colony at present laboured under was due most to the fall in the wool market at home, the decrease in the value of stock, and the competition in the European markets in the production of preserved meats. Clearly, all those matters were included in the pastoral interest. He was not stating this from any cursory glance at the affairs of the colony. He had reviewed everything

connected with its position and advancement, and he asked honourable members to look at the statistics for themselves, and to study them, and to work out for themselves a problem in political economy, and they would come to the same conclusion at which he had arrived. While a previous Government might have been rash and in haste—for himself, he had strenuously opposed the Government of the day in their railway policy, and joined with others to resist it—still, their policy was eventually carried into effect, and it would now be continued. He supported the proposed extension of the Central Railway, falling back on his original illustration, that the House were bound to complete the edifice which had already gone on so far.

Mr. SANDEMAN: If this was merely a question as to whether railways would pay an immediate return in proportion to the money invested, he certainly would not support the motion before the House, but honourable members ought to look a little beyond that consideration and take a larger view of the subject than it embraced. A very great amount of indebtedness had been incurred by Queensland in proportion to the population, and it was now the duty of Parliament to devise some method of making a large area of valuable territory more productive than it was at present, and to provide the means of relief from the difficulties under which the colony was now languishing. He would say that the colony had already benefited to the extent of a million of money annually by the enterprise of those who were engaged in pastoral pursuits, and would benefit to a largely-increased extent by their being enabled to extend their operations in the production of the great staple of Queensland; and the Government would be doing immense benefit to the colony by giving further facilities for increasing its productiveness. It was the duty of the House to do their utmost to endeavour to increase the productiveness of the country. Where one million sterling was realised now, two, three, or four millions might with proper facilities be ensured. In the debate on the Loan Bill, he remembered that his honourable friend, Mr. Heussler, touched one of the true chords of the present depression, upon which the great importance of the present question was based, when he said—

Speaking from memory, about ten years ago there were 8,500,000 sheep in this colony, as returned by the Registrar-General. The last return showed about 5,500,000 only. If the natural increase had been secured which the colony had been accustomed to in olden times, there ought to be about 20,000,000 sheep in the colony at the present time.

Now, he (Mr. Sandeman) asked those gentlemen who were engaged in pastoral pur-

suits, in the coast country as well as elsewhere, what had been the cause of that great decrease? The honourable Mr. Walsh had spoken of the Burnett district as one in which he lived for a considerable time, and which was now in a state of decadence.

Mr. WALSH: He did not.

Mr. SANDEMAN: Well, the honourable member referred to it. He did not name it, but he (Mr. Sandeman) knew perfectly well what district was alluded to when the honourable gentleman said it was a district in which he had spent the greatest part of his time.—

Mr. WALSH: He did not. He referred to a district in which he had spent the best and happiest years of his life.

Mr. SANDEMAN: It had been found from a variety of reasons that the country was not as capable now of producing the great staple of the colony as it was in years gone by. Men had gained more wisdom by experience. They had gone further and fared better. They had found that there was a large extent of valuable country in the far interior which was now occupied by cattle, and which, if the enterprising men who now held it had the means of locomotion—if they had the means of communication brought nearer to them—instead of retaining the stock which they now held in the shape of cattle, they would occupy their country with sheep, and would thus very largely increase the productiveness of the colony and enhance its prosperity. It was that which honourable gentlemen had to look at in the construction of railways. It was not the mere question of what would suit Brisbane or the other towns of the colony; though, if they looked at the question properly, they would find, and it must be admitted, that the towns had been raised by the staple production of the colony, and that without the great pastoral interest every town in the colony must retrograde. On this particular ground Parliament was justified in going to the expense that honourable members were now asked to concur in for carrying out the Central Railway. As he said before, he did not think the railway would pay as an investment in the ordinary sense of the word; but in the larger—in the national sense—all the proposed main trunk extensions would pay. There could be no question about that. However, they were now carrying out the policy, not only of the present Government, but also of the preceding Government. When that policy was initiated, some years ago, he objected to it; but his objection was not to the question of main trunk lines. His objections were against many of the various branch lines, which to the present hour he could not see the advantage of, and which he was sure would not repay or recoup the country for the expenditure

they must involve. He was certain that if the House sanctioned the works that were now required to enable the country to be developed, to increase the productiveness of its great resources, natural and otherwise, they would do the greatest benefit to Queensland at large. Not alone one interest would be advanced, but all interests. He contended, without fear of contradiction, that the extension of the main trunk railways, while increasing the wealth of the country, would increase the prosperity of the country in every other as well as the pastoral interest.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE said it was necessary that he should take the opportunity of saying a few words on the question. He regarded the policy of the present Government as simply following the example of the previous Government, who had entered upon the construction of a bunch of railways. The present was certainly a larger scheme than the former one. The honourable gentleman who last addressed the House said that the proposed railway now under consideration and the trunk railway extensions, which were to go on simultaneously, would not benefit the squatting interest alone. Well, the first railway that was ever constructed in the colony was for that interest, and the extension of the Central line would be very much for that interest. It would bring the produce of the squatters readily to market, and there was nothing else in the distant districts to be brought to market. But the country could not be developed by providing for the convenience of one interest alone. It was explained to the House this afternoon that the population, instead of increasing, was decreasing; consequently what they wanted was a policy that would increase the population of the country and ensure the industrial occupation of the land. The railways going into the pastoral country afforded no probability of increasing the population. The honourable Mr. Sandeman had talked about the advantages that would accrue to other interests from the enhancement of the advantages of the pastoral interest. The pastoralists had the largest part of the country at present; theirs was the greatest interest; it was the most money-making interest; but it gave least encouragement and employment to population. If the squatters were to have the advantages of railways, they ought to show how the interest on the money expended was to be paid. It should be paid by them, and not by the general population of the country that was unconnected with pastoral pursuits. In that case he (Mr. Edmondstone) did not think the general population of the country would have much cause to complain of the extension of railways to the far interior. The interest on the cost of the railways should not be raised from the general taxation of all the

inhabitants, because the advantages of the railways would not be derived by all classes equally. He would move the adjournment of the debate, so that the subject might be further discussed. He thought it was not very well explained how the work was to be carried out.

Question—That this debate be now adjourned.

Mr. MEIN said he thought the House ought to thank the honourable Mr. Sandeman for the suggestions he had made, because it would give the Postmaster-General the chance of bringing forward statistics, which honourable gentlemen required of him, to justify the proposition before the House; and he congratulated the honourable gentleman on giving utterance to his sentiments and candidly admitting what no previous speaker had admitted, that the construction of the Central Railway was obviously for the benefit of the pastoral interests of the colony;—

Mr. SANDEMAN: No.

Mr. MEIN: That, in fact, it was for the benefit of the squatters, whose interest was languishing.

Mr. SANDEMAN explained that he had said that the squatting interest in the colony was languishing, but that its revival would benefit other interests of the colony, and that that would be the effect of the railway, by increasing the productiveness of that interest in the way he had pointed out.

Mr. MEIN: Well, the squatting interest was languishing, and an opportunity ought to be afforded to the enterprising members of that interest in the interior, in the Central districts of the colony, to increase the grazing capabilities of their runs. That was the effect of the honourable member's argument. He (Mr. Mein) should like to know who were those enterprising men? It was admitted on all sides that the squatting industry was languishing; the increase of cattle was in excess of consumption. And yet was seen in the enterprising squatters of the colony an inability on their part to raise £20,000 to test an experiment for the purpose of finding a foreign market to get rid of their surplus stock. Yet those men were to have 390 miles of railway constructed for their especial benefit! Looking at their want of public spirit, and their inability to raise £20,000 for testing a scheme for getting rid of their surplus stock, it was no wonder that the squatting interest was languishing; but it was, also, no wonder that a large portion of the House, and the thinking people of the community, should pause before they consented to the construction of railways for a set of men lacking enterprise to such an enormous extent. He could not conceive how the construction of the three main trunk railways would increase the grazing capabilities of the colony. He thought the only advantage that those lines would afford would

be to enable the enterprising squatters to get their supplies up with more certainty, if possible, and at a trifle less cost than now, and, possibly, to send their produce to market much more promptly. He had heard, however, that a great number of those enterprising men were in the habit of boasting that they could actually send down their wool by bullock teams, and get up their supplies in the same way cheaper than by rail, thus competing with the railways which were admittedly constructed for their benefit. Such was their patriotism; such was the public spirit of those enterprising squatters! If they were doing that, their enterprise for the future would be directed, no doubt, in the same way—if the present proposed extensions were constructed. No argument had been adduced in support of the proposition before the House: no statistics had been furnished to justify it; and yet it was admitted that the railways were to be constructed, as in the main they had been constructed, for the benefit of one particular portion of the community. It had been pointed out by the honourable Mr. Walsh, that there had been no intimation given by the Government that that portion of the community which was so favoured was to contribute any portion of the money that was to be borrowed and expended for their benefit. It had been urged by the honourable Mr. Sandeman that the present extension was simply a continuation of the policy of the late Government. That he (Mr. Mein) denied *in toto*. It was an argument used to justify the honourable member's apparent inconsistency, in approving of the present scheme and disapproving of the scheme of the predecessors of the present Government. He stated that his opposition was not to the trunk railways that the late Government proposed, but to the branch railways. Why, at the time the honourable member referred to, there was not a single branch line of railway before the House. On the memorable occasion when the obstructive tactics of the honourable Mr. Murray-Prior and several followers of the present Government were adopted, they arose out of the proposal of the then Government to extend the trunk railway to the southern border of Queensland, to be connected with the railway system of the neighbouring colony. The House were kept up until 4 o'clock in the morning, and, with the assistance of the honourable Mr. Sandeman, the honourable Mr. Murray-Prior, and others who acted with him, opposed the principle of the general scheme of the late Government. How much greater cause had honourable members on the present occasion to oppose the scheme of the Government? Instead of having one or two branch railways, the Government proposed to make them all over the country;—and yet the Govern-

ment commenced with the promise that they would spend only £120,000 on branch lines, and they had now gone in for the expenditure of half-a-million. Circumstances altered the opinion of the honourable Mr. Sandeman in the most remarkable manner, and he congratulated the honourable gentleman on the fact.

Mr. MURRAY-PRIOR: The honourable Mr. Mein had brought his name up again. He was quite wrong. The real object of opposition on the occasion alluded to was to prevent the bunch of railways proposed by the late Government. The honourable gentleman further had misconstrued the words of the honourable Mr. Sandeman, whose argument was, not that the railway was to benefit the squatters, but also the towns and every interest in the community, in a great degree. At any rate, that was how he understood his honourable friend's argument; and he thought it was hardly fair for any honourable gentleman, as was the practice of one or two on the other side of the House, to try to make an honourable member say what he never had the slightest intention of saying. They all knew no one was a greater enemy than a renegade.

Mr. WALSH: What's that? What's that?

Mr. MURRAY-PRIOR: It was always found that, as soon as a person changed from one side to the other, he took most extreme views, as if to prove what a partisan he had been on the side that he had just left. He wished to point out that his honourable friend, Mr. Sandeman, was not arguing on the question for the benefit of the squatters, but really proved that the construction of the railway would be as much for the benefit of the towns as of the squatters. He, as a squatter, and for the interest to which they both belonged, could endorse that; he could speak impartially on the present question, because he was in no way affected by the extension of the railways proposed in the Government policy.

Mr. TAYLOR said he would just say a few words. His honourable friend, Mr. Mein, had dropped into a great mistake, when he stated just now that, under the leadership of the honourable Mr. Murray-Prior, the policy of the late Government was opposed by them because they would not pass a railway to join the Queensland system with that of New South Wales. The fact was, that that railway was the one the House passed out of the number brought forward in the Government scheme, and that railway was now being constructed. The others they refused—or rather, because another was refused, the honourable gentleman who then led the House, as the representative of the Government, withdrew the Government proposals altogether. As to the railways now

proposed being for the benefit of the squatters, he should like to know whom in the community they would not benefit? If they benefited the squatters, they benefited the towns; they benefited every other interest in the colony. What would the towns be but for the squatters? The railway now before the House, if carried out, would be the best paying railway in the whole colony, barring none.

Mr. WALSH: Hear, hear.

Mr. TAYLOR: He did not know whether the honourable member said "Hear, hear" in ridicule or not. He did not suppose the honourable member had ever seen the country, or where the railway was to go, and he did not suppose he ever would until the railway was made; but when the line was carried out he would admit that there was no better land in the colony. As far as the railway policy of the late Government was concerned, it was a policy of corruption and jobbery from beginning to end. He said so before, and he repeated it now. What was the Stanthorpe line for but to gain the vote of the honourable member for Carnarvon; what was the Maryborough and Gympie line for but to secure the seat of the Colonial Secretary of the day—the honourable member who represented Maryborough; what was the Bundaberg to Mount Perry railway for but to secure one or two other votes; and so it went on all through the piece? No one could deny it.

Mr. SANDEMAN: Hear, hear.

Mr. TAYLOR: There's simply a policy of corruption from beginning to end—a policy to buy votes.

Mr. GREGORY said he should take advantage of the opportunity of speaking to the amendment, to say that the honourable Mr. Mein was wrong in the statement made by him just now with regard to the basis on which the Opposition defeated him. As the honourable Mr. Taylor had stated, the Stanthorpe Railway had nothing to do with that defeat, as that line had been passed by the House as an instalment of a very valuable line of communication with the railway system of the neighbouring colony. If the honourable Mr. Mein would take the trouble to refer to the debates of the time, he would find it was true that the point on which the representative of the then Government was defeated was the bunching of the railways proposed—the endeavour of the Government to force upon the House the whole of these railways, good, bad and indifferent;—and, further, he (Mr. Gregory) was just reminded that it was not the honourable gentleman who was at the time the leader of the Council, but the honourable Mr. Thorn. On the original question now before the House, he argued to its logical conclusion that the extension of the Central Railway was to benefit every interest; that the towns

and the seaports would derive as great advantages from it as the squatters themselves. It had been asserted that the taxation which might be necessary to pay the interest on the money expended in constructing the line should rest entirely on the squatters. That was a fallacy. If the towns derived the lion's share of the advantage of the railway, they should bear the lion's share of the burden. In giving effect to the railway policy, honourable members were bound to see that it was harmonious with the wants and requirements of the whole colony. Well, looking to the largest producing interest, he held that spending money for its greater development was spending money with the greatest chance of benefit to the country generally; that being decided, let the taxation fall equally on all parties benefited. It would be a great injustice to let the greatest portion of the taxation fall on the pastoral tenants. Let them bear their full share—take off not the slightest part that they ought to bear. To treat the great producing interest of the colony with unfairness was as if, in the animal economy, it was held that the legs were and the head was not to be considered; or as if the right hand must refuse to support what was done by the left. If that interest should be unfairly treated the body politic would come to grief. He still maintained that the railway was for the benefit of the largest number of the community, and not for the exclusive advantage of any party or section.

Mr. MEIN: By way of explanation, as the honourable Mr. Taylor and the honourable Mr. Gregory had both contradicted his statement as a representation of facts, and as not justified by *Hansard*, he referred to that work as an authority for what he had said of the obstruction offered by honourable gentlemen on the occasion to which allusion had been made. First, the resolution respecting the Stanthorpe line was passed; after that, the resolution for the Bundaberg line came on for consideration. Then, it was that the tactics of obstruction commenced, by the honourable Mr. Murray-Prior, which were continued until 4 o'clock in the morning, with the assistance of the honourable Mr. Sandeman and the honourable Mr. Gregory. *Hansard* bore out that his statement was strictly accurate and that the contradictions of it were not in accordance with facts.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Though there was nothing in the debate that he need particularly refer to, and the subject before the House had been sufficiently discussed; yet, as there appeared to be some mistake in regard to the adjournment for dinner which kept honourable gentlemen on his side away rather late, when the House might properly go to a division, he should say something to occupy attention.

Some honourable gentlemen opposite said that the plans of the extension did not give as much information as plans presented to the House on previous occasions. They were precisely the same kind of plans as had been furnished to Parliament in connection with railways formerly authorised. With regard to the remarks of the honourable Mr. Cowlishaw, he could give him no further information than that already afforded to the House. The extension of the Central Railway, from Retreat, 130 miles, could be constructed for £3,000 per mile. There was no doubt that of the sixty-three miles now proposed to be authorised, fifteen miles were over country that would involve more than the average cost. But he contended that the average on the whole line would not be exceeded. In proof, he referred to the cost at which the twenty-seven miles now in course of construction was being carried out. Once over the Drummond Range, there was something like eighty miles of country that would scarcely need earthworks at all; it was almost perfectly level the whole way the line went. No doubt, Mr. Ballard would be able to keep strictly to his average, and would complete the railway for the sum stated. It could not be expected that he (the Postmaster-General) should be able to show absolutely in detail that the line would pay working expenses and interest on the cost of construction. His remarks on the Loan Bill did not apply to extending the main trunk lines. When he said that upon the plans coming before the House honourable gentlemen would be in a position either to approve of them or to reject them, if it should not appear that the works could be carried out at the cost mentioned, he spoke more particularly of the branch lines. The extension of the Central Railway was really giving effect to the policy of the late Ministry, as the honourable Mr. Mein would admit; and not only that, for the late Ministry did not initiate the policy, but the policy that was affirmed by Parliament before that Ministry came into existence. It was, in fact, the policy of the Ministry that his honourable friend, Mr. Walsh, initiated as Minister for Public Works. In the year 1873, Parliament voted £480,000 for the extension of the Central line 110 miles, from Westwood to Comet. At that time the average cost of the railways of the colony was something like £10,000 per mile; yet the Government of the day were so satisfied that the cost of construction could be very materially reduced, that they asked Parliament to endorse their proposal to undertake the Westwood-Comet extension with the prospect of carrying it out for something like £4,000 per mile. There was greater risk about that undertaking than there was about the present

proposal. At that time, there were only thirty miles of railway open in the northern, now the Central district—the line from Rockhampton to Westwood;—and it did not pay half its working expenses. Not only was the colony at the loss of the interest on the cost of construction, but it had to meet half of the cost of working the line out of the general revenue. In the face of those discouraging circumstances, the Government put £480,000 on their Estimates for extending the line to Comet, through unoccupied and almost unknown country. The railway that did not pay working expenses seven years ago, last year paid 3 per cent. towards the interest on the cost of its construction, in addition to working expenses. Every section of that line as it was opened for traffic not only increased the amount of the returns, but increased the rate of profit on the whole work. There was no doubt in his mind that were it not for the sudden depression, the depression of the past eight months, which followed the bad season, the low and decreasing value of stock, the fall in the price of wool in England—the main produce of this colony and of the districts connected with the line—the Central Railway would have shown better returns than ever before. But notwithstanding the extraordinary depression that prevailed, the falling-off was small—only something like a few hundred pounds in about £20,000. While the cost of management was small, with the increase of the length of the line, the cost of construction had been reduced to one-half what the Rockhampton and Westwood line was, and to one-third of what the Westwood and Comet Railway was, yet the same rates per mile were charged on the 170 miles of railway now open as were charged when there were only thirty miles open. If honourable members would only bear in mind that the pushing out of the railway would not only cause a demand for land for settlement, but would cause a very great increase of population out west; and, as the honourable Mr. Sandeman had said, that cattle on the runs now occupied would be replaced by sheep, and that the traffic on the line would be increased and multiplied thereby; they would recognise the advantage of, and the necessity for, the railway. It was said that the Central Railway would compete with the Southern Railway. Well, he answered, that there would be no competition.

MR. SANDEMAN: Hear, hear.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There would be plenty of room for the Southern, the Central, and the Northern lines. They ran out parallel from the coast, and would be divided from one another by a distance of 200 miles. And, when it was considered that each of those parallel lines, 200 miles apart, running due west, would penetrate

very rich and productive country, it seemed certain that each would have plenty of work to do, and that each would become fully remunerative when it was completed to a point at which rich country was reached.

Mr. SANDEMAN took advantage of the amendment to offer a few words, with regard to the comments of Mr. Mein, on the remarks he made. He had not been brought up to the profession to which the honourable member belonged, and he really did not desire to endeavour to make the worse appear the better cause. He did not support the resolutions before the House on the ground that the railway would be beneficial to the pastoralist. He did so on the ground that it would be an important element in advancing the prosperity of the country. He advocated assistance to the great producers of the country, in so far as it would enable them to increase the productions that gave trade to the rest of the community. He advocated the extension of railway communication, not because it would benefit the producer alone, but because the traffic that would ensue from the increase of the staple product of the colony would benefit in a large degree all the centres of population which depended so much upon the chief producing interest. The pastoral interest which raised the staple of this colony represented a very large amount of money. He pointed out that it might be doubled. His belief was that after proper appliances were brought to bear, the produce of the pastoral occupants of the districts connected by the railway with the seaboard would be doubled, trebled, and perhaps increased in even a greater degree. He asked honourable members to take a comprehensive view of the subject. If they increased the value of the production of the country—the production of the capital and labour already invested, the prosperity thereby derived must permeate throughout the rest of the community. That, he said, was one of the strongest reasons why the House should do what they could to enable the country to be developed; and one of the best means of developing a country was, as was generally admitted, the construction of railways. As to the remarks of the honourable Mr. Mein upon his arguments on a former occasion, he was perfectly willing to support trunk railways projected by his (Mr. Mein's) Government, or by any other Government; but he was decidedly opposed to many of the branch lines then proposed, and he was certainly opposed to the system of bunching, by which the late Government endeavoured to thrust their proposals upon the acceptance of the House.

Mr. WALSH: It did seem very strange, from the remarks made by honourable gentlemen who were going to support the Government policy, that they contradicted

their own action in some way when they negatived the proposals of the previous Government.

Mr. MEIN: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: Honourable gentlemen threw the whole blame of the railway policy on the previous Government; in fact, the Postmaster-General was no exception. That was the refrain that ran through the songs or psalms of honourable gentlemen opposite. Did it not strike honourable gentlemen that the present Government had no right reason in sound sense, or according to commercial experience or knowledge, for what they were now doing? If the railway policy of the late or any previous Government was begun badly it could never end well, even under the present Government. Like causes brought about like results. They had been told that the bunching system was a bad one—that it was pernicious. Was that any reason, then, why it should be continued? Honourable members had been told that it was extravagant and led to log-rolling—that there was no justification whatever for it;—and he could quote their words, even the words of the honourable Mr. Sandeman, to that effect. Honourable members now tried to excuse themselves for inconsistency of action, for doing now that which they refused to do on a previous occasion; but it was quite certain that many of them were in a state of fog and bewilderment. Honourable gentlemen belonging to the party represented by the Postmaster-General—the party that sat up to 4 o'clock in the morning to oppose railways proposed by the late Government—now advocated somewhat similar proceedings by the present Government. They were not consistent. He now occupied a similar position to that which he occupied before. He was consistent. He was no “renegade.” When the honourable Mr. Murray-Prior used that word he presumed he had a meaning. When in office he (Mr. Walsh) denounced extravagant expenditure. When in opposition he did so, when the honourable Mr. Murray-Prior was on the same side. He said to him, he was consistent—he was not a renegade—he never was a renegade. The honourable gentleman convicted himself. Let him remember all he said and all they said—all that they agreed to, when they belonged to the party that denounced lavish and extravagant expenditure on railways. The most reckless men in the world should not have used arguments such as had been used in this debate—that because the late Government in their log-rolling system introduced a bunch of railways, every one of which those honourable gentlemen opposite condemned—the present Government must be supported in what they proposed. On what grounds did they argue that this country was committed to

the extension of the railways? Well, he did not think the country was committed. He did not think that the inhabitants, if consulted on the subject, would admit it. Were they committed to the Bundaberg swindle? Were they committed to the Maryborough and Gympie Railway? If the people had their will, they would not have it proceeded with, even now: they were ashamed of it; they would at any rate divert it. He adhered to every principle that he ever advanced, and he defied anyone to show that he ever abandoned his principles. He could abandon his party—he could abandon office—but he could never abandon his principles. Honourable members on the other side of the House to a man, with the exception of the honourable Mr. Gregory, denounced the expenditure which they were asked to authorise this evening. They might find better reasons for opposing it than the pitiable and miserable excuses which they now offered for going on with it. They did so before. Did not the honourable Mr. Taylor know in his heart, and did he not believe, that such expenditure would sooner or later bring the country to ruin?

Mr. TAYLOR: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: It was stated, forsooth, by some honourable members that they would rather see the present Government do wrong than another Government do right, and that, under even such circumstances, they would support the present Government. He would rather, himself, see the Government do right. He certainly should not like them to leave office, because he did not want them to leave: he had too great a dread of the late Government. He had a real liking for their predecessors. The extravagant loan and the reckless expenditure involved in the railway policy would yet hurl the present Government from office. The people would, at the hustings, practically show their disapproval of the outrageous expenditure that Parliament was now asked to put the finishing stone to. The honourable Mr. Sandeman said that, when he was speaking on the Loan Bill, he expressed his intention of opposing, not the trunk lines, but the branch lines. Well, he (Mr. Walsh) expected to hear, when the branch lines were brought forward, the same arguments from the honourable member as were urged by him now. His argument was, that the only lines in the colony that would pay were those which connected the large centres of population. If any line at all would pay, it was a line from a city like Brisbane, running only a short distance, connected with some other populous or large producing district. What good would it do the metropolis to have trains running once a week to the far west, which were all that was necessary for the traffic that the line would command? If the colony had as good a Minister for

Railways when the extensions were complete as it had now, whomever he might be, he would have to say that one train a week to those distant districts would be sufficient to do the work. Of that he was perfectly sure. The honourable Mr. Mein was quite right when he said, speaking of the patriotism of certain gentlemen, that they sent their own bullock-teams to compete with the railway. All his (Mr. Walsh's) reading, all his inquiries, convinced him, from the experience of American, European, and English railways, that, unless there was a great population or large mineral deposits to create traffic, long lines of railway never would pay. The short lines out of London and New York were those that paid best; not long lines across a great expanse of unproductive country. Long lines should never be made, unless to connect large settled populations, or established and productive industries, to command enormous passenger traffic, or enormous mineral traffic, which could never be the description of the Central line. Why did not the Postmaster-General, who lived at Rockhampton, and was the chronicler of public events, know the reason that the line to the westward did not pay at first? The honourable member said that the further the Central Railway was extended the better it paid; that when there was a short line only, it did not pay at all. When it was yet a short line, the bullock-teams that came down the country did not unload short of Rockhampton. A distance of thirty or forty miles only was no gain to the teamsters; no gain to either servants or masters; and therefore there was no traffic on the railway. When the railway was extended a hundred miles from Rockhampton, there was something to be saved by unloading and sending the produce on by railway to Rockhampton—a very different state of things from the time when they would have to stop at a miserable little place like Westwood. The incidents of the Central Railway were not to be used as an argument in favour of long lines. He was pretty sure that a mistake had been made in reference to the Government of which he had been a member going in for an extensive scheme such as had been described. He remembered that they asked for an extension of thirty or forty miles; but not more, he was pretty sure. He had no recollection of the party of which he was a member embarking in such an extensive scheme as the one mentioned by the Postmaster-General. He should be glad if the honourable member could prove that he was right, and to find that he could score one occasionally, because it must be quite a relief to him. He was rather amused at his honourable friend, Mr. Taylor, in his usual expressive manner, giving castigation, almost, to the supporters of the present scheme, in those pertinent questions

he put in reference to the bunch railways, when he asked, What was the extension to Stanthorpe for?—What could be said of the line to Gympie? The honourable gentleman seemed to touch their feelings. He was cheered when he asked what was to be thought of that line introduced by the previous Government from Bundaberg to Mount Perry. Had he (Mr. Walsh) not the same right to repeat such questions, now? What good would result from them to the country? What necessity was there for any one of the lines proposed? Let honourable members take that to their hearts. He asked, what was there in connection with those lines since they were sanctioned that would justify the spending of a farthing more on the Mount Perry to Bundaberg Railway, or on that from Maryborough to Gympie, or on that from Warwick to Stanthorpe? Certain members of the other House stated that those lines would not pay for the grease on the engine wheels, yet the Government went on piling up the agony. Well, he hoped the House were not going to follow up that reckless extravagance by authorising any more such railways. Honourable members would recollect that when the celebrated bunching took place in the other Chamber he insisted upon the plans being initialled, and that he endeavoured to have it laid down as a rule that no plans should escape from the Chamber without the certainty of their being identified. He endeavoured to ensure that the signature of the Speaker should be put on any plans and sections approved of by the House. It would be a very good plan to adopt now. Honourable members should bear in mind that a plan had been smuggled out of the other Chamber. Many honourable members knew of it, and affidavit was made before justices that they had seen such a plan. The House were now discussing the Central Railway, and plans and sections were on the table. If honourable members would examine them, however, they would find that some of them purported to be plans of the Central Railway; while others were designated as plans of the Northern Railway. How was that? If honourable members would look at the business paper for to-day, they would see that there were three motions in reference to railways. The Central Railway was the first; the Northern Railway was the second; and there were others to be considered. In connection with the resolution for the adoption of the plans and sections of the Central Railway, there were five plans on the table which the House were asked to approve of; but he found that something was astray. Some plans evidently belonged to the Northern Railway. He should like the Postmaster-General to explain, if he could, the meaning of what he now called attention to. Whatever was

wrong must undoubtedly be corrected, before the House could be expected to approve of and adopt the plans.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: All the plans referred to the Central Railway, and they were correct. The extension of the line was shown so to be identical with the Central Railway. The distances, 197 to 205-20 miles, were all clearly marked. It was only very recently, indeed within the last twelve months, that the Central Railway was so called. Before that time, it was always known as the Northern Railway. The title on the plans was simply a clerical error, or an oversight of the draftsman. It was no indication that the plans were incorrect.

Mr. WALSH did not say the plans were incorrect. He called upon the Postmaster-General to prove that they were the plans of the Central Railway. Two out of the five plans on the table were designated as belonging to the Queensland Northern Railway. Surely, he was justified in pointing out the error. He thought the least the Postmaster-General could have done would have been to have acknowledged it, and to have seen that it was corrected. How did the House know, if they passed the resolution adopting the plans as those of the Central Railway, that the Government might not hereafter refuse to go on with the works? He supposed there was no objection to his moving that the words "Northern Railway" should be struck out, and the words "Central Railway" be substituted instead, on the plans?

The PRESIDENT said the motion was not regular.

Mr. WALSH thought it was regular and in order. He knew that the resolution before the House for the approval of the plans would pass, but whether the works would be carried out he was not at all sure, unless the plans adopted were correct. He begged that the President would take into consideration, if the Postmaster-General would not, that the plans before them did not bear the endorsement which would connect them with the motion now under consideration.

Mr. MEIN: The honourable Mr. Walsh had raised a very important question of order. The House were invited to approve

Of the plans, sections, and book of reference of the extension of the Central Railway from 197 to 260 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly.

The message had been sent up to the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Railway Act, which required that before railways could be constructed the plans, sections, and books of reference connected therewith should be approved of by both Houses of Parliament. It appeared that although the Legislative Assembly's message purported to be accom-

panied by the plans, sections, and book of reference of the extension of the Central Railway between the points named, the plans that were before them did not describe the Central Railway as going between those two points; but, in fact, described the Northern Railway: two of the plans purported to be extensions of a portion of the Northern Railway, the others purported to be plans of the Central Railway. He submitted that it would not be competent for the House to alter the plans so sent up from the Assembly. They could only approve or disapprove of them. But, as the Council had found what was obviously a mistake, perhaps the proper course to be adopted was to refer the plans back to the Assembly for correction; because, as far as the Council were aware, those plans were the plans which had met with the approval of the other House. In the terms of the motions on the business paper for the day there was a distinction between the Northern Railway and the Central Railway, and the House would be clearly going outside the terms of the message sent up to them, and now under consideration, if they adopted plans referring to the Northern Railway, which would come under consideration on a future occasion.

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL**, speaking to the point of order, said he did not think the error was material. The plans themselves showed as clearly as could be what was intended—what railway they referred to. Several points named in the survey—Barilla Range and others—showed that the plans could belong to none but the Central Railway. It was only a clerical error that had been pointed out, one owing to the circumstance that the designation of the railway had been recently changed. There was not the slightest doubt that the plans on the table referred to no other line but the Central Railway, which was formerly called the Northern Railway. What he said must be evident to anyone who would look over the plans for himself. He could show by a quotation from a speech of the honourable Mr. Walsh on a former occasion that he did not consider the plans were material at all, as the Government might adopt—and were free to adopt—some other route than that laid before the House. The plans gave the House an idea of the route the line was intended to take, but it did not follow that it was absolutely necessary for the Government to adhere exactly to the line laid down on the plans. He did not think the point raised was worth discussing further.

The **PRESIDENT**: There was no process under the Standing Orders by which a correction could be made in the plans which were now before the House. They must be accepted or they must be rejected.

Mr. **WALSH**: He should like to see them rejected, of course; but not on a technicality. He should like to see them rejected on their merits, not on their demerits. He thought he had heard of instances where such an obvious mistake—or a mistake that might lead to an important blunder, but still an obvious one—had been allowed to be altered. The word “Northern” on the plans was certainly calculated to deceive; and, with a Government less righteously disposed than the present Government, it might lead to serious complications. If the word “Northern” could be used on the plans and not mean the Northern Railway, it might be put on the plans for the Sandgate Railway. There was nothing on those plans that any ordinary colonist would identify as pertaining to a line of railway in the central districts. He (Mr. Walsh) would hold the plans out for inspection, and he was certain that eight out of ten men would not be able to tell him what part of the world was indicated on them. He hoped that regard for the character of the House would lead honourable members to acknowledge the propriety of having the correction made.

The **PRESIDENT** directed the attention of the House to the fact that the question before them was for the adjournment of the debate. No motion for the alteration of a paper that came up from the other Chamber was admissible at the present time.

Mr. **WALSH** submitted that a point of order was raised.

The **PRESIDENT** said he took it that the point of order had been decided.

Question—That the debate be adjourned—put and negatived.

The original question was then put.

Mr. **WALSH** rose to a point of order, and called attention, now, to the fact that the plans and sections were not, according to their designation, those of the Central Railway. He held one of them in his hand, which was designated as being connected with the Northern Railway. On reference to the business paper, it would be seen that the House had yet to discuss the Northern Railway, which was not, however, yet before them.

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL** contended that the point of order was already decided by the President. He remarked, in explanation, that the plan was one which had been prepared before the alteration was made in the name of the railway commencing at Rockhampton.

Mr. **WALSH** did not dispute that for a moment; but it was before the House for approval under an improper designation.

The **PRESIDENT**: Would the honourable gentleman state his point of order concisely?

Mr. **WALSH** (*exhibiting plans*): Two out of five plans laid on the table for the House to approve of purported to be plans of the

Northern Railway; hence they were inadmissible, in their present form, with the motion.

The PRESIDENT said he was satisfied that the honourable gentleman referred to a fact which was incontestible, that there was an inconsistency in the wording of the documents. But there was nothing in the point of order which should induce the House to alter the wording of the documents sent up from the Assembly, or to do otherwise than reject or accept them as now before the House.

Mr. MEIN put it to the President, whether it was competent for the House to pass the resolutions moved by the Postmaster-General, unless they had before them the

plans, sections, and book of reference of the extension of the Central Railway from 197 miles to 260 miles.

As a matter of fact, the House had only before them the plans of 220 to 260 miles, and there were no plans of the Central Railway for 197 to 220 miles.

The PRESIDENT: The House could accept or reject as they might think proper, and for whatever reasons they should think proper, the plans and specifications before them. But he held that it would be utterly out of order to consider any other question than that just now before the House.

Mr. WALSH rose,

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: "Question," and "Spoke."

Mr. WALSH again stated a point of order, objecting that it disconcerted him when so much feeling was exhibited by honourable members; but—

The PRESIDENT ruled that the point of order was the same as had been already decided by him. The question before the House was the original motion of the Postmaster-General.

Mr. SWAN rose to move the adjournment of the debate, in order that a further opportunity for discussion should be given.

The PRESIDENT: It had just been decided that a majority of the House were not disposed to adjourn.

Mr. SWAN moved the adjournment of the House.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he hoped the House would not allow the discussion to be postponed because of what had arisen. The plans were perfectly correct, and could be testified to by anyone who knew the country.

Mr. MEIN contended that there were no plans before the House properly described of the Central Railway between 197 and 220 miles; and that as a practical suggestion had been made, it was the duty of the Postmaster-General to get over the difficulty. Admittedly, a mistake had been fallen into; the question was, how to get out of it. There was nothing on the specifi-

cation—no description, no town, no river—by which to connect it with the motion. The only means the House had of identifying it was by the name attached.

Mr. IVORY saw very little force in the arguments adduced by the honourable Mr. Walsh. The House had before them plans acknowledged by the Assembly to be the plans of the Central Railway from 197 to 220 miles. Granted, that on them appeared the title "Queensland Northern Railway": that had been amply explained. Hitherto, the railway had been known by that title. The plans had been drawn while the railway was still known as the Northern Railway, and before a more northern line led to the name of the line from Rockhampton being changed to, and gazetted as, the Central Railway. The question that the House had to decide was, whether they would approve or not of the plans and sections sent up by the Legislative Assembly. Were the plans and sections on the table those which had been transmitted by message from the other House? Did the Clerk of the House acknowledge them as so received, according to the description in the message? For himself (Mr. Ivory), he recognised the plans as belonging to the Central Railway. Was Barilla Range on the Northern line, or on the Central line?

Mr. WALSH: The Northern.

Mr. IVORY was sorry for the geographical knowledge of the honourable gentleman, who had been a long time in the colony, when he said that Barilla Range was on the Charters Towers line. Really, the House would do perfectly right in adopting the plans before them, though there was a slight clerical error in the nomenclature.

Mr. PETTIGREW supported the motion for adjournment. It would not be correct for the House to proceed, when the title of the plans was wrong, if there were no greater error to be discovered.

Mr. MURRAY-PRIOR contended that the President's ruling was conclusive.

The PRESIDENT: It was competent for any honourable member to move that the documents be sent back to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. MURRAY-PRIOR: The plans could be identified as belonging to the Central Railway by anyone who looked at them. It was a pity that the name on them was not attended to before; but the objection to going on with the question was merely quibbling.

Mr. WALSH: He thought that when he pointed out an egregious blunder some other term might be applied to his conduct than quibbling. How did the House know that there was not some shuffling in the matter of the plans? Honourable member, who supported the Government had been at a caucus, and spoke according to the

lesson they had received. However, he was not afraid to speak; he and his friends had not learned a lesson, and had not sworn allegiance at all to the Government to pursue a particular course whether it was right or wrong. He doubted very much whether the plans were in such a form as, if adopted by the House, would at law justify the Government in proceeding to carry out the Central Railway.

Mr. HEUSSLER: Some litigation might arise hereafter with contractors; and if the plans were taken into a court of justice there might be a difficulty in proving the authority of plans admittedly misnamed. There was no need to hurry the question. It would be best if the Postmaster-General would find some way of rectifying the error in a business-like way.

Mr. GREGORY concurred, and moved a substantive motion—

That the plans and sections forwarded to this House as the plans and sections of the Central Railway be referred back to the Legislative Assembly for the correction of clerical errors in the titles of two of the plans.

Mr. SWAN would withdraw his motion for the adjournment of the House, to admit of that motion being put.

Motion for adjournment withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. TAYLOR was happy to see that the proper course was taken; and he congratulated the honourable Mr. Walsh on the great victory gained by him. It was clear that, in another place, the plans were not examined as closely as in the Legislative Council. He supposed that all plans had gone through in somewhat the same way. It was anything but a credit to the Assembly to have sent the plans up in the way they had been received by the Council.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he should offer no opposition to the motion of the honourable Mr. Gregory; and suggested that the plans should be now sent back without further discussion. No doubt the Assembly would endeavour to have the plans made right. In the meantime, the House could go on with the remaining motions respecting railways.

Mr. WALSH: Hear, hear.

The motion for returning the plans to the Assembly was then put and agreed to.

A message was forthwith sent to the Legislative Assembly conveying the resolution of the Council, and accompanied by the plans and sections as ordered to be returned.

NORTHERN RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That this House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Extension of the Northern Railway from 50 miles 56 chains to 87 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 16th instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

The motion was for the adoption of plans and sections of works authorised by the last Parliament. In the session of last year £100,000 was voted for the Northern Railway from Townsville towards Charters Towers; in 1877, there was £200,000 voted for the completion of the line to the last-named terminus; the total amount voted being £300,000. Last year the plans and sections for the portion from Townsville to 50 miles 56 chains, more than one-half of the line, were adopted. Nearly all of that, or rather 35 miles of it, was under construction, and the rest was almost ready to be contracted for; so that on the adoption of the plans now before the House, 87 miles of railway would be in progress, speedily to connect the coast with Charters Towers and carry out the intentions of the late Government. He wished the House to understand distinctly that the present proposal comprised no portion of the 130 miles of extension which were provided for in the Loan Bill a fortnight ago. It was simply for the completion of the works authorised by the last Parliament of which the plans and sections had not been prepared at the time. With regard to the cost of the line, he was assured by the Minister for Works that the thirty-five miles now under construction would be completed for within £3,000 per mile. The first fifteen miles was in the hands of small contractors, and would be done for something under £3,000 per mile, as nearly as could be ascertained; and on what was called the large contract, the second section of the line, twenty miles, which was also in hand, the cost, including permanent-way, would be at the rate of £2,715 per mile; leaving £300 nearly as a surplus in hand, the line having been estimated to cost £3,000 per mile. So that not only on the Central Railway, which was under discussion this evening, but on the Northern Railway, contracts were being carried out for works at less than £3,000 per mile. That was the most satisfactory circumstance the Government could adduce in support of their belief, *bonâ fide*, that they could carry out the railways for the amount set against them in their estimates. With regard to the Northern extension, it was the engineer's estimate that the Government went on; they had not taken any fancy or experimental estimate of their own. There was no shadow of a doubt, as far as he could ascertain, that the line would be completed for the sum named. With regard to the Burdekin Bridge, £100,000 was voted for it in 1877. It had been found since that a bridge which would answer all the purposes of the railway could

be completed for less than one-half of the sum voted; and that vote would not only construct the bridge, but also twenty miles of railway. That was the best proof he could give the House that the Government were really sincere in their intention to carry out the railways on an economical scale, and that they would be able to give effect to their intention. The proposed extension began about a mile and a-half this side of the Houghton River; then it ascended the coast range at a very easy gradient, and when it got to the top it proceeded on a gradual descent. The Burdekin River would be crossed by a low-level bridge, which explained the reason why the expense of the bridge would be so much less than was originally estimated. Thence the line would reach Charters Towers at a point between Milchester and the Towers. It appeared that there was an elevated plateau, a very good site for a terminus, either for getting into Charters Towers or for getting away from the town afterwards. He did not think the House would require further information from him with regard to the line, which was authorised by Parliament on the proposal of the late Government. The only thing the present Government had done in connection with it was to reduce the cost very much.

Mr. MEIN said he should not address the House but for the concluding remarks of the Postmaster-General, who claimed for the present Government the credit of having reduced the cost of the railway at present under consideration, leaving it to be inferred that the late Government had proposed to construct it on an extravagant principle. The honourable gentleman must be aware that, with regard to the Northern Railway, although commenced by the present Government, his (Mr. Mein's) late honourable colleague, Mr. Griffith, had made every arrangement, efficient and sufficient, for its economical construction, before leaving office. So far as could be gathered from the Postmaster-General's remarks, the only instance in which the present Government had done anything to reduce the cost of construction was the alteration of the design of the Burdekin Bridge. It was to be hoped that, in their efforts to economise, they would not rush into the other extreme, and produce railways of no durability. As far as he (Mr. Mein) could learn, the Burdekin was a river almost entirely flooded during the wet season, which lasted over several months of the year; and that to prevent the absolute stoppage of traffic a high-level bridge across the river was necessary. It was now proposed to substitute a low-level bridge. He did not know whether it was the intention of the Government to substitute for the iron bridge proposed by the late Government, a wooden structure; if so, it would be a very unwise step. Instead of

ensuring real economy it would be a costly change, owing to the necessity for repairs and to the danger of a wooden bridge being swept away by floods; besides the expense, otherwise, of stopping traffic during the wet season.

Mr. WALSH wished to know if there were any sufficient plans and sections of the railway?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The plans had been before the House during the last seven or eight days.

Mr. WALSH said he did not suppose it mattered much whether honourable members looked at them or not. He was not quite sure that the House had any more right to sanction them than those relating to the Central Railway, previously before the House. They were not at all parliamentary plans, such as were required to be laid before Parliament under the Railway Act. They were only "trial surveys," as marked. He supposed it was not easy to see the object of their production. The statute did not speak of trial surveys at all, but of plans which the Governor in Council had adopted. It was such plans which should be brought before Parliament for approval, and trial surveys would not come under that designation. The very fact of the plans being designated on their face "trial surveys" of the Northern Railway showed that they were not parliamentary plans. There might be a dozen trial surveys made before a survey was approved of; and there was nothing on the plans before the House to show that they had passed the Executive Council. There was nothing to show that, if the House adopted those plans, they would pin the Government down to make the particular line delineated on them. He spoke with some little knowledge of the subject. Those plans had evidently been got up in a hasty, haphazard, slip-slop manner, to enable the Government to borrow the three millions of money that they were now empowered to raise and that their hearts were set on. Did his honourable friend, the Postmaster-General, tell him there was no book of reference for that line? To his knowledge there was a great deal of private land resumed for it, and he asked, Where was the book of reference to show it?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There was none in this section.

Mr. WALSH: This began at Townsville.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No.

Mr. WALSH: Well, a plan designated as a trial survey was not the survey required by the Act of Parliament to be laid before both Houses for approval. He thought the House ought to have more information in connection with the proposed work. They should not proceed in a hurry, until they had all the information they required.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL was understood to remark that there should be no more obstruction to business.

Mr. WALSH: The only obstruction he wished to see was obstruction for the benefit of the country. Indeed, he would be sorry to see any other obstruction carried on in the Upper Chamber. The Northern Railway was one which he believed was introduced by Government to satisfy certain voters. The day would come when it would be shown that the Northern Railway was antagonistic to the Central Railway. The way in which the Central Railway was working to the north, in the very direction that the Northern Railway was to be carried—if the two were carried in the courses now proposed—would lead to a junction. He did not know whether honourable members would be glad that such a system was to be adopted for the advantage of the country. One likely result would be competition between the two, to carry all the business of the interior to Townsville or to Rockhampton. He did not know whether the Legislature were justified in spending half a million of money for that purpose. He did not know whether the Council could be justified in approving of the expenditure to carry the Northern Railway to Charters Towers. There was nothing in the interior to justify it; no trade, no population, no natural wealth appertaining to that portion of the country. He had not the least doubt that, before the line was finished to Charters Towers, most of the population in the district would be removed to distant parts of the colony or to some other colony. He would vote against the motion.

Mr. IVORY said the honourable Mr. Walsh was decidedly an adept in finding difficulties. He had told the House that he had experience in regard to railway lines, and he had shown them that he was greatly enlightened on such matters. Well, the House would not be doing wrong in following his procedure. He (Mr. Ivory) would accordingly quote from a speech of the honourable gentleman when, as Secretary for Public Works, certain railway plans were brought forward by him in the Legislative Assembly for approval; and he would give his own words:—

He might inform the House that there would have to be considerable deviations from these plans and sections, and therefore the Government would not feel themselves to be altogether bound by them, because there had not been time for the survey as to the Northern Railway line to be minutely carried out. These plans and sections, therefore, were now laid on the table merely as a guide for honourable members in dealing with this question. If the surveyors should be able to find a better route, and one along which a line of railway could be cheaply and easily constructed, the Government would feel it to be their duty to adopt it; and,

as honourable members would admit, they might, by spending £1,000 on surveys, succeed in saving £100,000 in the construction of the line.

He would recommend the House to be guided by the honourable gentleman's remarks on that occasion. It was well known the plans and sections of the description under consideration were not binding on the Government. There was not a railway in the colony that had been carried out strictly according to the plans adopted by Parliament. He thought the little technicalities that had been made grounds of objection to the House proceeding with business might be left alone, more especially after what he had read of the honourable member's advice on the former occasion.

Mr. WALSH: He was only more honest than his successors.

Mr. PETTIGREW thought that the honourable member, Mr. Walsh, had been most straightforward in his action in telling the House what he did, and what he thought the survey was. As the construction of a line proceeded, it was altered more or less from what the engineers had laid down. A railway was never made in the old country without some slight deviation from what the engineers had laid down; for there were limits of deviation reserved, to which extent all projected railways could be varied if necessary. He did not see that there was any need to lay down a hard-and-fast rule; for it might prevent the saving of £100 or £1,000 occasionally, or prevent the carrying out of a great improvement in the line. He would vote against the Northern Railway, because there was nothing to induce him to regard the proposal favourably. No data had been given to prove that the line would pay; very little was known about the country through which the railway was to pass; there was no guarantee that there would be a lasting trade between the two towns to be connected by it.

Question put and passed.

TOWNSVILLE RAILWAY DEVIATION.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That the following resolution come to by this House on the 30th August, 1877—"That this House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Railway from Townsville towards Charters Towers"—be rescinded, so far as relates to the first two miles of the said Railway.

2. That this House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of a Deviation of the Northern Railway at Townsville from a point marked OM (blue) to a point on the original survey marked 2 miles (red), being a distance of 1 mile 21 chains 40 links (blue), as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 16th instant.

3. That the foregoing resolutions be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

He said he hoped to obtain the support of honourable members on both sides of the House for the motion, which was for lessening the cost of the Townsville and Charters Towers Railway in the first two miles out of Townsville by a sum of about £5,000. If honourable members would refer to the resolution adopted by the House last year, they would see that the line was originally taken away from the township and carried down to the jetty. Had the jetty been proceeded with to completion, there would have been some compensation for making that mistake—as perhaps he might call it—for carrying the railway in the direction proposed by the late Government, instead of into the town. It had been found, however, that to make the jetty of any practical service the sum of £105,000 more than had already been spent upon it would be required. The total expenditure on that structure up to the present time was about £65,000. The money had been appropriated by Parliament in order to run the Townsville Jetty to a point to accommodate large vessels—the object it was designed for—and now the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers said that an additional £105,000 would be required to carry out that object. Three years ago, £35,000 was first appropriated for the jetty with the idea that it would complete the work; but it was not nearly completed though an expenditure of almost double that sum had been incurred. Therefore, the present Government felt themselves bound to resist any further expenditure upon it. They could not see their way clear to complete a work at a cost of £160,000 or £170,000 which was originally estimated to cost £35,000. When they resolved not to go on with the jetty it became necessary to carry the railway into the town; because, until the jetty was completed, it would not be of the slightest service to carry the railway on to that side of Townsville. It would be seen by the plans why the deviation which was now proposed commenced two miles out of town, and ran across Ross Creek into the very centre of Townsville. It was true that the line did not communicate with navigable water, but there was scarcely a railway in Australia that did so. In Sydney, in Brisbane, and in other metropolitan cities of Australia, it had been found quite possible to do a very large amount of business without carrying the railways to deep-water; and it was the unanimous wish of the people of Townsville to do what was now proposed. No doubt, it would be most judicious to make the deviation of the line as the Government proposed, because it was found that there was practically very

little direct business going on between the seaboard and the interior. Nearly all the produce received from the interior first went into the merchants' stores, and was then under their arrangements put on board the vessels for export. In the same way, most of the cargo arriving was placed in the merchants' stores; the goods or supplies did not go direct from the ship's side into the country. He did not believe that, were the railway carried to deep-water, that arrangement would be interfered with. The merchants of Townsville got up supplies for the people of the interior from Sydney and Brisbane, and in nine cases out of ten they first stored them in their warehouses before distributing them to their various customers. The merchants acted as distributors for and to their various customers resident in the interior; so that no advantage would be gained immediately if the railway were carried to deep-water. He had already stated that there would be a saving by the deviation, because of the easier nature of the country, while the distance of three-quarters of a mile in the length of the line would be saved. He spoke from the engineer's estimate. Further, as the railway would now have its terminus in the very heart of the town, it would afford the people every convenience they required for the conduct of trade. Another advantage in favour of the deviation was, that it would not go through so much private land as the line originally approved of by Parliament. The Townsville people—very properly, he thought—took objection to the circumstance that, were the original line carried out, it would cause the shifting of the town from its present site. Were the railway to be carried through Crown lands, and did the site to which the town would be removed still remain in the hands of the Crown, he admitted that the argument would not have been so strong as it was; but, as a matter of fact, all the lands involved were private property. The effect of carrying out the railway as originally proposed would be to injure the people of Townsville, and to confer a very great advantage upon the owners of the private lands to which reference was made. So that, taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration, and seeing that the railway if carried to the jetty would not command trade from sea-going ships which could not come up to the railway, and that the full advantage could not be gained without enormous additional expenditure, the House must agree with the Government that the deviation was a desirable one. Seeing that the Government were not positive the projected jetty works could be completed even for the large sum named, there was no doubt whatever that the proper course was to give effect to the deviation of the railway in the manner

shown in the plans before the House. He did not think it necessary for him to say anything further about the matter, but to ask honourable members to judge for themselves of the proposal by an examination of the plans submitted for their approval.

Mr. MEIN: During the earlier part of the evening the Postmaster-General spoke of the necessity for constructing railways, not for the benefit of the people in the coast towns, but for the benefit of the residents of the interior of the colony. In moving the resolution now under consideration he sang an altogether different song. The House never heard one word from him with regard to the wishes or the necessities of the residents of the interior. What suited Townsville was the burden of his song. The wishes of the people of Townsville dictated the policy of the deviation, which alone belonged to the policy of the present Government, in connection with the present extension of the Northern Railway. No doubt, a portion of the townspeople were anxious for the change. No doubt, the change would never have been thought of had the Minister for Works and the Government had any other desire than to assist the wishes of a few greedy merchants of Townsville. The remarks of the Postmaster-General with regard to the storing of goods required for the interior might be correct; but the honourable gentleman had altogether ignored the interests of the people in the interior of the colony, and their requirements for the shipment of their export produce. He (Mr. Mein) presumed that the people of Charters Towers, and of the interior districts which the railway was to reach, would raise some produce for exportation. Doubtless, their produce for exportation had now to be stored in the Townsville merchants' warehouses; but he should think that if facilities were offered for it to be taken down from the interior to the ships' side, the people of the interior would benefit to a considerable extent thereby. However, that would not meet the wishes of the persons whom it was intended to suit by the deviation of the railway. Any person who was familiar with Townsville must be aware of the fact that Government had spent a considerable amount of money in the construction of the jetty for the improvement of the port. It was proposed now to leave that work at a stand-still, and unconnected with the business part of the town, from which it was separated by a creek. The original project was to connect the jetty with the railway and the business part of Townsville. An expenditure of £64,000 had been incurred in the construction of the jetty; and, practically, if the deviation of the railway now proposed should be sanctioned by Parliament, that money might

just as well have been thrown into Cleveland Bay. The Postmaster-General was not altogether correct in his statement that the engineering work connected with the jetty could not be completed under £105,000. He (Mr. Mein) had Mr. Nisbet's report before him, and that officer stated that—

To complete the jetty in stone to the distance of 2,800 feet (ten feet below low-water), and provide wharfage near outer end for coasting steamers, will require a sum of £16,000 beyond amounts already voted.

So that, really, for the purpose of saving a direct outlay of £16,000, the Government would absolutely render useless the expenditure already incurred of £64,000! And for what purpose? Not for the people who were ultimately to get the benefit of the railway, but for the advantage of a few greedy merchants of Townsville who owned lighters, and possibly to assist materially a member of the Ministry to be returned for that constituency after his defeat elsewhere. It was manifestly to the advantage of those persons who had lighters, and who had wharves on the bank of Ross Creek, to send their lighters two miles out to vessels in the roadstead, and to charge their unfortunate customers—who were residents in the interior, and who would be benefited by the completion of the railway to the pier—a large amount for the lighterage and the storage of their goods. Who would be benefited if the railway was made and carried the goods from the vessels alongside the pier up to the city of Townsville and straight away to their destination in the interior? A large sum would not then have to be spent for lighterage. The scheme proposed to the last Parliament, and sanctioned, contemplated the railway terminating at the jetty and being connected with the centre of Townsville by a bridge over Ross Creek at a point practicable for all business purposes. It was now proposed by the resolution before the House that the terminus of the railway should be almost a mile, certainly half-a-mile, away from the business centre of the city. There were only one or two small wharves to which lighters went, and a few small offices along the north branch of Ross Creek; whilst the real business of Townsville was transacted almost on the beach, on the Bay. The deviation and the change of the terminus would only benefit those few greedy merchants of Townsville who simply looked to their own pockets and not to the interests of their customers in the interior. For them the divergence of the railway was to be brought about, and a very valuable and costly structure rendered useless. As the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers pointed out, if it was intended to construct the jetty so as to make it useful to the public, the plant now available should be employed and should not be allowed to go

to waste. In the not far distant future it would be inevitable, owing to the commercial importance of Townsville, to make the harbour practicable for vessels of comparatively deep draught. Why not, in view of that absolute certainty, proceed with the construction of the works at the present time? To make the jetty serviceable £16,000 was all that was required. To complete it according to the plan only now partly carried out most advantageously, before the plant and temporary works should be removed which were now available for the purpose, would cost £49,000. The sum of £105,000 named by the Postmaster-General would embrace other harbour works of great extent, including dredging, lighting, moorings; and providing accommodation for vessels of large draft. There was no immediate necessity for the deepening of the harbour; but surely, to save the £64,000 already expended, it would be wise of the Government to expend the £16,000 additional—to utilise the works already carried out.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It would not do.

Mr. MEIN: He did not think anyone would venture to assert that the opinion of Mr. Nisbet on the subject was to be disputed on the *ipse dixit* of any unprofessional man. Mr. Nisbet was one of the highest engineers in Australia, and he had devoted his great talents to the subject; and he had put down in black and white his opinion upon it. For the purpose of saving £5,000 by the proposed deviation of the railway to a portion of the town distant from the centre of population and business, the Government would leave unproductive £64,000. If the jetty was carried out according to the original scheme, and the railway was connected with it, the traffic would recoup the Government for the outlay very soon;—the £5,000 would be returned in the first season. The people whom the railway would benefit would be saved expense, and the Government would gain. Instead of the heavy charges for lighterage imposed on them, the people would be at a comparatively trifling outlay for the conveyance of their goods without delay from the seaport to the interior, and their produce would be taken directly on board ship for export. If the deviation had been placed before the House properly, honourable members would be enabled to follow his remarks. He did not know whether it was for the purpose of concealment or not; but the plans did not show the original design of the railway as proposed by the late Government. With regard to the private land that the construction of the original line would affect, and the increased expenditure for its resumption that would be involved if that line was adhered to, he could only say that the land through which the line went was not of an extremely valuable character at all. Surely,

the Government did not intend, for a grudge against an individual, to defeat a line of railway and thereby injure the public! That was an item which should never enter into the calculations of any Government. They had all along pretended that their sole object was to benefit the people, in whose interests the railways were to be constructed. For the reasons he had given, the House should pause before they consented to the proposal before them. They should consult the interests of the public, and insist upon the original design being carried out; and not allow the large expenditure already incurred for the advantage of an important seaport and of the people in the back country behind Townsville to be thrown away. He should certainly oppose the motion.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It was necessary that he should answer the remarks of the honourable Mr. Mein, who had made an imputation—which he was sure the House would not endorse—against the Government in reference to the railway being carried away from the centre of the town. Now, the terminus was as near the business centre of Townsville as it could be carried. The town was extending in the same direction.

Mr. MEIN said he had been there; the Postmaster-General had not.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Since the honourable gentleman was there several large stores and buildings had been put up—amongst them an iron foundry, ice works, and several other large business establishments. He was informed on good authority that while the town was extending in the direction he indicated, there were no buildings at all going on in the other direction. The statement that the Government would descend to such practices as to divert the railway from a particular place, and in another direction, to injure private individuals, was quite unworthy of the House and of the honourable gentleman who indulged in such an insinuation. There was not a member of the present Government who would sanction such a procedure for one instant; it would be outrageous. As to the amount required to build the jetty, £16,000, as the honourable Mr. Mein contended, would give only ten feet at low water. He assured the House that the steamers trading to the port of Townsville drew at least thirteen feet of water; so that the accommodation at the end of the jetty would not be sufficient for them. If the honourable Mr. Mein read the engineer's report, he would find that to carry out the whole structure of the Townsville jetty—to make it of any practical utility—and to get sufficient water for all the purposes of the shipping of Townsville, would cost £105,000, as he (the Postmaster-General) said before. He might remind the House that the engineer who

gave those figures was the same who recommended the work at the beginning which was to have cost £35,000, but on which the Government had up to the present spent £64,000. He thought the Government had very good reasons for postponing the completion of the work until the circumstances of the colony required such accommodation as it was originally intended to provide for the port of Townsville. The honourable Mr. Mein alleged, further, that the Postmaster-General said nothing about the wants of the people of the interior. Practically, the produce came from the interior, and invariably went into the merchants' stores before it was put on board the steamers.

MR. MEIN: It was bound to do that at present.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: In Rockhampton, the railway was constructed to navigable water, but, since it was opened, had there been a single bale of wool shipped direct? The merchants of Rockhampton received the wool and stored it free—not at all with the idea of making profit out of that operation;—but they were the agents of the persons who grew the wool, and they received it, and kept it in store free, until they made the best arrangements for shipping it. Unless there was a very large business in wool, there would be little inducement to bring it down from the interior direct and put it on board the steamers. It sounded well to say that that was the way required; it was a nice thing to talk of bringing it down direct to the ship's side, but practically it was not done at all. Even the supplies for the station were not taken from the ship's side, and sent thence direct into the country. The mercantile men in the coast towns were the distributors of all goods imported and the receivers and shippers of all produce exported. He did not say that when the trade became very large the produce would not in all probability be taken direct to the ship's side, but before that would occur, or could occur, there was abundance of time to carry out the works originally proposed at Townsville. The jetty so far as it had gone was a substantial work, and would take no harm by being suspended for a while. Every reasonable facility would be afforded by the railway and otherwise to the people up the country whose supplies would be received and whose produce would be exported. He did not think any other remarks of the honourable Mr. Mein needed notice. What the honourable gentleman hinted to the House about the deviation being carried out by the Government for electioneering purposes, he treated with contempt. He denied that there was any improper motive actuating the Government in that matter. They knew to a thousand pounds what the works contemplated by them

would cost to complete, and they knew the utility of the deviation; but they did not know—and could not know—by £50,000 what it would cost to complete the original design. The engineer's estimate was for £35,000 in 1876, and it had jumped up to £105,000 in 1879. In the face of circumstances of that sort the Government must be very careful indeed. He did not say that was the fault of the engineer—probably the design of the whole structure had been altered.

MR. MEIN: He was going to say that.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The evidence of the report read by the honourable Mr. Mein showed that the work could not be completed to the point of utility unless the Government spent £105,000.

MR. MEIN: The honourable member had challenged what he stated, and he would read the whole of the report referring to the question. In the report of the Chief Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, dated the 30th June last, was the following:—

At first the jetty was authorised to be carried out in stone for a distance of 1,262½ feet, and the remaining distance of 1,537½ feet—in all 2,800—to 10 feet below low-water in open pile-work, same as Bowen Jetty: total estimate, £49,500.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Read the whole of it.

MR. MEIN (*reading*):

Last year the outer portion was, however, authorised to be continued in stone, and a sum voted towards the additional expense to be thereby incurred.

To complete the jetty in stone to the distance of 2,800 (10 feet below low-water), and provide wharfage near outer end for coasting steamers, will require a sum of £16,000 beyond amounts already voted.

Then the report went on to state something about soundings, and then followed these words:—

Supposing 18 feet below low-water to be the depth to which it was decided to deepen the harbour, the channel of approach would require to be dredged to the same depth, in a direction due north and south, for a distance of from 3,000 to 4,000 feet, and leading lights placed on shore to guide vessels through it at night. Practically, however, vessels would be able to steer for the harbour at high-water in almost any direction, as the present depth, without dredging, at the place where the pier heads are proposed to be fixed, would be 15 feet at high-water of lowest neap tides, and from 19 to 21 feet at high-water of spring tides. This is one foot more than the present available depth in the Brisbane River; but I do not think it would be advisable to terminate the jetty in less than 11 feet below low-water, as proposed.

To complete the jetty on this plan to 3,960 feet—a work which could be most advantageously carried out before the removal of the plant and temporary works now available for the purpose—and provide wharfage at outer

end for coasting steamers, would require a sum of £49,000 beyond amounts already voted for this purpose.

Then the report went on to describe various works for improving the harbour:—

The remainder of the works—which are not so dependent upon the present appliances and facilities for economical construction as the jetty proper above referred to—could be carried out as might appear desirable hereafter.

I estimate that to extend jetty 3,960 feet, erect half-tide breakwater on west side of enclosed space, dredge entrance channel to 18 feet below low-water by 300 feet wide, dredge (say) 20 acres of harbour space to same depth (exclusive of first cost of dredge plant), erect screw pile jetty 700 feet long by 30 feet wide available for vessels on both sides, provide wharfage for coasting steamers near outer end of jetty, provide railways, sheds, lights, moorings, &c., complete, would require a sum of £105,000 in addition to amounts already voted for this work.

Those were the complete works, which would suit a harbour with the necessities of Sydney. His (Mr. Mein's) remark was perfectly correct—that to make the Townsville pier available for coasting steamers, only £16,000 was required to be spent.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It would not do.

Question put and passed.

PLANS, &c., CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The following message was received from the Legislative Assembly:—

MR. PRESIDENT,

The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's message of this day's date, relative to a Clerical Error in the Titles of certain Railway Plans returned with such message, beg now to intimate that they have caused the errors in question to be corrected as requested, and now return the said plans to the Legislative Council.

H. E. KING,
Speaker.

Legislative Assembly Chamber,
Brisbane, 23rd September, 1879.

The PRESIDENT said he was informed that five plans had been sent to the Legislative Assembly, and that only two were returned.

MR. WALSH: That was a breach of privilege. The Assembly had returned the plans, according to their message. Five plans had been sent to the other House, and there were only two plans sent back. As far as he could see, there were three missing.

The PRESIDENT said that was what he had intimated to the House. The business of the House could not remain standing in consequence of the irregularity of the Legislative Assembly.

The matter dropped.

SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That this House approves of the Plans, Sections, and book of Reference of the Extension of the Southern and Western Railway as received by message from the Legislative Assembly, dated the 16th instant.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

He said the House would not require him to occupy much time in the explanation of the motion. There could be no difference of opinion as to the desirableness of the Western Railway line being extended. The plans, sections, and book of reference which were on the table gave all the information that the House could desire. The extension proposed was to Mitchell Downs, in a westerly direction beyond Roma. There was with the plans a book of reference containing a schedule of the private lands that would have to be resumed by the Government. Honourable gentlemen had thoroughly examined those plans and required no further information from him, except that the line would be carried out at the same average cost as the two others that had been already before the House; and that the Government were in possession of an offer to construct the whole 130 miles of the extension at an average cost of £3,000 a-mile.

MR. WALSH said it appeared to him that there was an attempt to play some joke upon the House by the other Chamber, and he thought it was a question, now, whether the Council should go on with any other business. The President had just acquainted them that he had received a message from the other Chamber informing the Council of the return of the five plans of the Central Railway; but upon examination it was found that there were only two plans returned. To his mind the communications between the two Chambers were assuming a serious aspect. The Council had parted with five plans, which were in their possession; in so far they merely entrusted them for amendment to the other House; and the other House had kept back some of those plans, which the message stated had been returned to the Council. He did trust that honourable gentlemen would see that the question he now brought before the House was of some importance.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL rose to a point of order. The President had already stated that the question raised must not be allowed to interrupt the business of the Council. There was another motion under consideration, and he had no doubt that by the time the House had disposed of it the mistake complained of would be cleared up. No doubt it was a matter of inadvertence.

The PRESIDENT understood that the honourable Mr. Walsh was alluding to a previous motion with a view to show that the present one could not be agreed to.

MR. WALSH: If the Postmaster-General would rely upon his own powers in the House, without trying to drag in to his support the dictum of the President, it would be much better for the dignity of the Council. When the honourable gentleman wanted to interrupt a member who was doing his duty to the House, if he possibly could, he dragged in or perverted in some possible way the ruling of the President to aid him. He (Mr. Walsh) must state, as a reason why they should pause before considering any more railway questions, that they had a message from the Legislative Assembly relative to the clerical errors in the plans which had been returned to that House, and afterwards it was stated that the plans had not been sent up to the Council corrected, the fact being that only a part of those plans had come up. The message from the Assembly was not correct. He did not wish to use a harsh expression towards the sister branch of the Parliament. He could not divine the meaning of what had occurred, unless it was an attempt to treat the Council with contempt. The Postmaster-General expected that the rest of the plans would come up in the course of the evening; but the House should do no more business until they got the other plans from the Legislative Assembly. They had probably miscarried on the road. The earlier portion of the evening had been taken up by the House endeavouring to correct the manifest mistakes of the other House. They would be justified in arresting all business until the present matter was cleared up.

MR. HEUSSLER thought they should not go on with any other business before the question of the missing plans was settled. The matter had been brought before the House by the honourable Mr. Walsh in a very able way; and it struck him that they might dispose of it before they concluded any new business. He abstained advisedly from any remarks at present on what had occurred. When it was cleared up, perhaps it might be a matter for comment by honourable members.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, for the information of the House, stated that he did not think it was necessary to send a formal message to the Assembly in the first instance, under the belief that a mere mistake of the messenger in conveying the plans had occurred. He did not intend to ask the House to adopt the plans of the Central Railway until they were returned, and therefore the Council ought not to send another message. They might go on with the Southern and Western Railway, which was the question really before the House; and if

the missing plans had not been returned when the present question was disposed of, he should ask that the consideration of the Central Railway be postponed. He had not the slightest idea of forcing it on the House.

MR. WALSH: Hear, hear.

Question put and passed.

PLANS, &c., CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL asked the permission of the House to move that a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly, informing them that the plans of the Central Railway had been returned to that House for correction, but that they had not all been sent up again to the Council as intimated by message.

[*The plans in question were at this stage brought into the Chamber by a messenger.*]

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL asked leave to withdraw his motion.

MR. MEIN and MR. WALSH both objected to the withdrawal.

After a short delay,

The Clerk of the Council stated that he had received the following letter, which he read:—

23rd September.

DEAR SIR—The accompanying plans should have accompanied the message lately sent, and were kept back in error. Please receive them now.

Yours very faithfully,

LEWIS A. BERNAYS.

H. B. FITZ, Esq.,

Clerk of the Legislative Council.

MR. MEIN said it seemed to him a very unusual mode of communication between the two Houses of Parliament, that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly should send a message to the Council. It seemed treating the Council with the greatest indifference. If the Clerk of the Assembly found out that a mistake had been committed, it would be obviously his duty then to report it to the head of that House; and the Speaker alone could communicate to the House, or take them into his confidence to adopt such a course as would get over the difficulty that had arisen. A message had come up to the Council from the Assembly purporting to return certain documents which had been sent back to the Assembly for correction. The House had the evidence of their senses, and the statement of the President that the message was not carried out by the documents returned; three plans were missing. Now, after the matter had been reported to the House, a subordinate officer of the Assembly—he did not use the word offensively—sent a message to one of the officers of the Council, to ask him to get the Council to receive the three documents that ought to have been transmitted to the House in another way altogether. He (Mr. Mein)

thought it was treating the Council, to say the least of it, in a way that they should not tolerate. Their proceedings should not be conducted in such a manner. It was the duty of the Postmaster-General to preserve the dignity of the Council and to persist in his message as already proposed. It was not a question for one side or the other, but for the House as a whole: Were they prepared to submit to indignities being heaped upon the Council with impunity? He (Mr. Mein) did not say they ought to resent them; but they ought to maintain their dignity and see that others respected it, by conducting their business in a proper and regular way.

MR. HEUSSLER was understood to suggest that a blunder had been committed. A message from the Clerk of one House to the Clerk of the other was not for the House. But whether it was a good way for the Postmaster-General to ignore a message sent from the Council to the Assembly, or *vice versa*, was a question to be decided. Under the circumstances, it was a blunder to ignore what had taken place.

MR. WALSH presumed that it was to be understood that the Postmaster-General was now on his defence, and that the honourable gentleman had some apology to make to the House, or, at least, some explanation. Matters had got into a very extraordinary state. He had a good many years' experience of the proceedings of Parliament, and he never before knew the writing of the Clerk of one Chamber to the Clerk of the other read out as business between the two Houses. The proceedings of the Council were now interrupted by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly writing to the Clerk of the Council, in this way:—

23rd September.

DEAR SIR—The accompanying plans should have accompanied the message lately sent, and were kept back in error. Please receive them now.

Yours very faithfully,
LEWIS A. BERNAYS.

H. B. Fitz, Esq.,
Clerk of the Legislative Council.

That was the queerest way of communicating between the two Houses that he ever knew in his life. The Standing Order of both Houses provided that—

Messages from one House to the other shall be in writing, and shall be communicated by the Clerk-Assistant of each House respectively, unless the House transmitting the message shall otherwise direct.

Until the Council had proof that the other House commanded Mr. Bernays to write a letter to the Clerk of the Council, they were bound to treat that letter as an improper communication:—

Messages carried by the Clerk-Assistant of either House shall be delivered to the Usher or Sergeant-at-Arms, as the case may be.

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The letter and the plans were brought into the House and delivered at the table by a messenger; not by an officer of the House. A certain proverb was very applicable to the present circumstances. The question was, now, how were the House to extricate themselves from the position in which they found themselves? He must enter his protest against the letter addressed to an officer of the House being taken for an explanation of the *laches* of the other Chamber. Probably the President could instruct the Council as to the course they should pursue. At the present moment they occupied an undignified position. They had not been properly treated. Only a pretence of complying with their message had been made; and, to rectify an omission or error to answer their message, up came a miserable letter from a subordinate of the other House—and not by order of that House, seemingly.

The PRESIDENT said he wished to mention that he was the cause of the letter being read; because he thought it necessary that the explanation should go to the House as it absolutely appeared. He felt no doubt in his own mind that the intention of the writer of the letter was to correct an error in the passage of the plans from one House to the other; and he should hope that no honourable member of the Council would for a moment consider that the dignity of the House was in the slightest degree imperilled by an action of the trifling character of the one before them, this evening.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL rose to move that the corrected plans and sections of the Central Railway, as sent up this evening by the Legislative Assembly, be approved of by the House.

MR. MEIN: The motion could not be put without notice; and he objected to it.

The PRESIDENT: The objection was fatal, as the motion was in a form other than that originally proposed to-day—unless the House consented to accept it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he thought the House might accept the motion to-night. There had been some hours' discussion on the Central Railway at an earlier period of the sitting; and it was only by a pure accident that a decision was not arrived at by the House. His motion, now, was a mere formal matter. The House could suffer no inconvenience from adopting the motion, which was before them in proper form but for the clerical error which had been discovered in the plans and which had been since corrected.

The PRESIDENT: Was there any objection to the question being put?

MR. MEIN: He had already objected.

The PRESIDENT: The question could not be put.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he should give notice of the matter for a later hour.

Mr. MEIN objected. The Orders of the Day had been called on; and it was inconsistent with the Standing Orders to proceed with any notice of motion.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It was the consideration of a message from the Legislative Assembly that he wished to proceed with. He moved that it be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAY RESERVES BILL.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved the second reading of "A Bill to Amend the Western Railway Act and the Railway Reserves Act." He did not think it was necessary to take up the time of the House with a long explanation of the measure. It was known to honourable members that under the Railway Reserves Acts all moneys received from the sales of land within the boundaries of the several railway reserves were to be set apart to a separate account, to be available either for the construction of railways within the reserves, or for the payment of interest upon the expenditure on the construction of such railways. The arrangement had been found productive of very great inconvenience in the Colonial Treasurer's Department. There was now a sum of £120,000 or £130,000 to the credit of the trust fund of the railway account, derived from the alienation of lands in the reserves, and the money could not be made available except for the payment of small sums of interest which accrued upon the railways which were constructed within the reserves. He alluded especially to the Central Railway, which just passed diagonally through one corner of the reserve. A very small portion of the railway was therefore chargeable upon the Central reserve, which was an area of 100 miles one way by 120 miles the other. Similar consequences resulted from the other railways. While the Government had the sum of £450,000 a-year interest to pay, it seemed a very absurd thing that they should keep a portion of the land revenue in hand in that way. The Government contended that so long as the interest upon the railways was chargeable to the Consolidated Revenue, so long ought all the proceeds of the Crown lands sales within the colony to be available for the payment of that interest. Had the proceeds of the sales of land in the railway reserves borne any relation or any proportion to the sums chargeable on the railways, or connected with them, there might be some argument for retaining the system initiated under the Railway Reserves Acts; but there had not been the slightest attempt to make the reserves correspond with the railways; and, as there could be

no possibility of carrying out the original design of the Railway Reserves Acts in that particular, the Government had come to the conclusion that the clauses which prevented the payment of moneys into the Consolidated Revenue ought to be repealed, and they had brought in the Bill to repeal those clauses accordingly. The Bill simply referred to the transfer of moneys from one account to another; and it had been fully explained in the Treasurer's Financial Statement, which he (the Postmaster-General) had no doubt honourable members of the Council had read. From the Treasurer's point of view, all the moneys derived from land sales in the railway reserves were to be available, instead of being locked up in separate accounts. The 2nd clause of the Bill enacted that—

All moneys now standing to the credit of the trust fund or the "Western Railway Account" or "the Railway Account" respectively created by the abovementioned Acts shall be transferred to and all moneys to be derived from the alienation of lands in the reserves as provided by the said Acts respectively shall be paid into the Consolidated Revenue of the colony.

Mr. MEIN said he should scarcely have addressed the House but for the remarks of the Postmaster-General, who stated that no effort had been made with regard to the railway reserves to make them harmonise with the railway lines to be constructed. Though his remarks, as far as he (Mr. Mein) understood them, only referred to one railway reserve—that was, the Central Railway Reserve—the reason for the divergence in that case was that, when the railway was first projected, the Government of the day intended to carry it up towards Clermont, and the reserve was created with that view. The intention of the Railway Reserves Acts was that the districts through which the line went should provide the means for the construction of the railways—that they should bear the cost, on the principle that those persons who got the benefit of a thing should pay for that benefit. Accordingly, the area of the reserves extended fifty miles on each side of the lines of railway. There was an exception in the case of the Central Railway reserve, which he had already indicated, and also in the Wide Bay and Burnett Districts. The whole of those two districts was supposed to benefit by the construction of the two lines of railway projected within their area, and they were therefore wholly included in one reserve. Although for a short space of time it might appear hard for one particular district to have more money to its credit from the sales of land in the reserve than the amount that had been expended up to a particular period on the construction of railways, yet it must be remembered that the House had just now passed resolutions for extending certain railways, and that the

money arising from the sales of land in the reserves ought to be available for construction. £200,000 to the credit of one particular line would be soon exhausted by the works authorised. By the Bill the Parliament would abandon a distinct principle that had been affirmed by Parliament in two sessions, that the districts benefited by railway construction should bear the cost. They would be acting unwisely in transferring from the trust accounts of the districts in which the railway reserves existed to the Consolidated Revenue the large amount that had accrued from the reserves. It was not at all the proper way of meeting the difficulty that had arisen. The colony had a diminished revenue; the Legislature had made provision for extending the railways and increasing the public expenditure; but, in order to make up the present deficiency in the revenue, the Government would appropriate moneys which ought to be available for public works, and yet made no provision for increasing the revenue in the future. In view of the number of railways projected, a large amount of territory was alienated under the existing Railway Reserves Acts, for the purpose of raising money to carry out those works; but, owing to the accident of a decrease in the revenue, the Government were going to divert the money so raised; they meant to appropriate it in a way altogether foreign to the principle laid down in those Acts. He objected to the abandonment of that principle. However, the majority of the Legislature agreed that, by robbing the country of a portion of its capital, the Government would carry the object they had in view. He hoped the Government and the Parliament would bear the blame attached to their act, and accept the full responsibility of it.

Mr. HEUSSLER said the Bill, though a short one, was of very great consequence. On a previous occasion he held that the railway reserves were a very wise provision, if the object for which they had been made should be faithfully carried out. He was of opinion that the proceeds of the sales of land in those reserves would be sufficient for the payment of interest on the whole expenditure upon railways. It would be a very wise plan to make some provision apart from the general revenue for the deficiency that would arise out of the working of the railways, as well as for the interest on the loan. He did not think the railways would pay for many years. He objected that he was unable to bring forward information which he desired to lay before the House, because certain returns which he had moved for some time back had not been produced. He wished to show the House that the main industry of sheep-farming was in a very desolate state. However, he had been informed that the far interior was an excellent

sheep country, and that when those railways reached out to those fine fertile districts the colony would be able to retrieve itself, and take the old stand which it formerly held in respect to the staple product of Australia. He was very sorry the Postmaster-General never furnished those returns. They had been laid on the table some weeks ago, but they were not yet printed. A paper which came into his hands a short time since, and which was produced in the Legislative Assembly, shewed the falling off of sheep in the settled districts, which was, to his mind, a very serious matter. He was very anxious, in connection with railway extensions, to make use of the returns which he had moved for. Unless the House insisted upon the prompt production of papers which honourable members asked for, he did not see how they could be as useful in the transaction of the business of the country as they desired to be or as occasion demanded. It was a slur upon the Council that when returns were moved for they were not furnished by the Government. If it was to be tolerated, all he could say was that it was a miserable way of doing business. The withholding of the returns was an underhand way of treating him and the House, and looked like cowardice on the part of the Government. The House should not submit to that sort of treatment. He had no ulterior object. He had moved for the returns in the interests of the country, and in the hope that he should be able to do some good.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL informed the House that the returns referred to had been produced before the House, and sent thence to the Government Printing Office in pursuance of the order of the Council. They were extremely voluminous, and would take a great deal of time and difficulty of labour in printing them. There was a large amount of work in the Printing Office, which might account somewhat for the delay in the production of the returns.

Mr. HEUSSLER: It was a very good excuse that was made by the Postmaster-General; but he could not accept it. The exercise of a little diligence would have ensured the returns being laid on the table of the House long ago. He was not fond of making complaints, but on the present occasion he had good reason to speak. He had made suggestions half-a-dozen times lately to the Postmaster-General as to how he could manage public business, and two or three times the honourable gentleman had accepted those suggestions with advantage: this very evening he had followed one. He never offered factious opposition to the Government, and when an honourable member wanted information from the Government it ought to be forthcoming. When an honourable member wanted

certain returns, of which he had given ample notice, he should not be neglected. The excuse of the Postmaster-General might appear a good one to himself, but it had neither hands nor feet.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was advanced through all its remaining stages and passed without amendment, and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

Messages were received from the Legislative Assembly transmitting resolutions as to the desirableness of continuing the exercise of the functions of the Parliamentary Buildings, the Refreshment Rooms, and the Library Committees during the recess; the Bills of Exchange Bill, without amendment; the Divisional Boards Bill and the Licensing Boards Bill, with amendments of the Council disagreed to.

The Orphanages Bill was read a third time and passed, and returned to the Legislative Assembly; and, subsequently, a message was received from that House informing the Council that their amendments in the Bill were disagreed to.

The Victoria Bridge Lands Sale Bill was considered in Committee, reported without amendment, and the report adopted by the House.

Other matters which were not disposed of were postponed for consideration until next day.

The House adjourned at 10'45 p.m.
